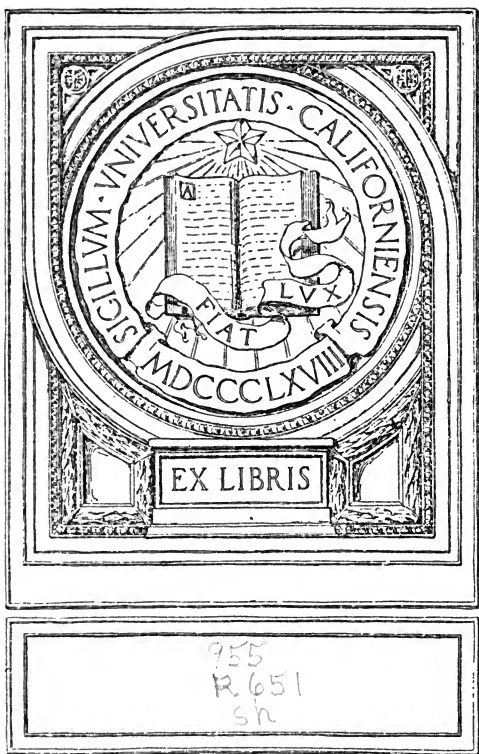


# SHIPMATES



MORGAN ROBERTSON





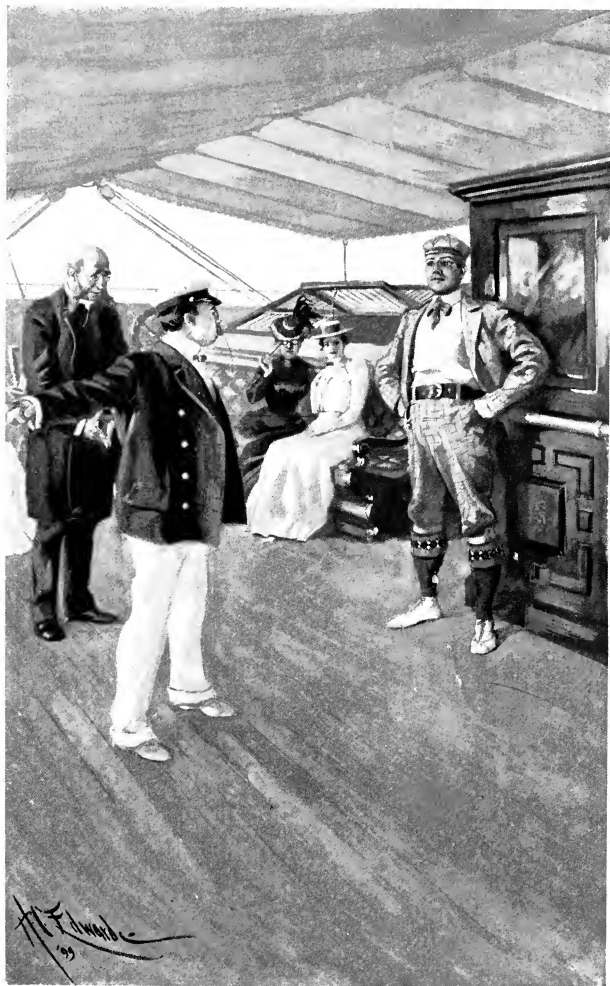




# SHIPMATES







“I order you to leave my boat at once !”

(See page 25.)

# SHIPMATES

*By*

MORGAN ROBERTSON

*Author of*

“Masters of Men,” “Where Angels Fear to  
Tread,” “Spun Yarn,” etc.



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TO  
GEORGE HORACE LORIMER

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# THE NUISANCE

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## PART I

NATURE had endowed him with brain and the essentials of manhood, but his parents, unable to comprehend, had endeavoured to supplant these with the education of a young lady. They partially succeeded. At seventeen he was a credit to his tutelage—as harmless and useless a prig as refined environment can produce. His diction was faultless, his dress immaculate, and his morals above par.

Intended for the ministry, he had been shielded from the contaminating associations of public schools, and what he knew he had learned from his parents, his nurse, his governess, and private tutor. He knew that most people were vulgar, that incorrect speech was but little less sinful than profanity, that quarrelling, even in self-defence, was shockingly disgraceful, and that the only fit and consistent course of action for a gentleman afflicted by sudden assault was to turn the unsmitten cheek to

the smiter. He knew that women were good in a ratio commensurate with their beauty—that while an old or ill-favoured woman might be vengeful and dishonest, it was manifestly impossible for a young and charming girl to have a wicked thought or motive. As he had no sisters, and his intercourse with young ladies usually began and ended with the lifting of his hat, it was easy for him to know this.

He knew a few other things of no account, and the list of practical things which he did not know is beyond enumeration. In time he learned and unlearned a great many, but this concept of womankind, born of his seclusion, nourished by a strong romantic fancy, and proven conclusively by his carefully selected literature—which told only of the good, the pure and the beautiful—made an impress on his mind that was never thoroughly effaced.

At this stage of his development his mother died, and with her going went a large part of the gentle pressure that had moulded his character. His abstracted and grief-stricken father, having done his duty by the boy, now left him to himself. So he lifted his head and looked about. Grounded as he was in propriety, he used his new-found lib-

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erty only in the matter of books. It was enough. He read what he could not have found in his father's library. Choosing at haphazard, he devoured iconoclastic philosophy, which played havoc with some of his spiritual beliefs; modern political economy, which told him that things were not as they might be; novels which, while widening his horizon, conflicted in nowise with his ideals—and finally, a tale of the sea. This last opened up a new world to him, and choosing no more at haphazard, he drank in all printed nautical lore that was within reach.

There was a strain of Norse blood in his veins. Externally, it manifested itself in yellow hair, blue eyes, pink skin, and promise of giant stature. Internally, it developed in his soul, under the stimulus of this reading, a repugnance for the humdrum life laid out for him, and a thirst for travel and adventure that brought him, at the end of a year, into his father's study to announce that he would not preach, that he would go to sea, and that he had arranged preliminaries with the Congressman of the district—even to the passing of a competitive examination—for an appointment to the Naval Academy. All that he needed was his father's consent and an outfit.

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At first astonished, then enraged, as he saw the work of years undone before his eyes, the father refused, and, in the stormy scene which followed, struck the boy, who had hardly felt pain in all his life. What followed was humiliating. The father was larger than the son, and in his prime; but his arms were pinioned immovably to his side, and he was forced into a chair, while the boy, white as death, save where the open hand had left its red imprint, looked into his face and informed him in a new voice that he wished he were not his father so that he might fittingly return the blow. When released, the furious man gained the front door, opened it, and explosively ordered the ingrate to go, never to come back.

So, John Braisted left home. Whatever of remorse or regret the father may have felt when his anger cooled he carefully concealed. Three months later, when the Congressman showed him a letter from mid-ocean, full of boyish explanation and complaint, he displayed as little interest as he did four years after, when the same Congressman—who was interested—read him a newspaper account of a heroic rescue at sea, in which the name and description of John Braisted, Third Mate, was given laudatory prominence. Still, he was

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a father, and there was Norse blood in his own veins.

The events and adventures—the strenuous sequence of hard knocks and hard fare that went toward the unmaking and remaking of John Braisted, have no place here. At the end of ten years an endless chain of letters and a radiating flow of money overspread the world. Consuls, commissioners, crimps and runners, pilots and marine editors, where English is spoken, knew that a slowly dying father would see his sailor son before the end. And so, one day, the big chief mate of a big in-bound ship received a newspaper clipping from the pilot at Hongkong, quit his berth when the anchor dropped (to the annoyance of his captain, for he was a good officer), took steamer passage for New York, and arrived barely in time to clasp the hand of a worn and withered man and promise to give up the sea.

It was not the John Braisted of ten years ago. An overgrown, unformed boy, with a girl's face, had gone away; a straight-limbed, square-shouldered giant had come back—a man with a voice of authority, with face the colour of old copper, and hair the lighter hue of hemp—whose gait and gestures suggested the grace and agility of a pan-

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ther, with the might of a grizzly bear. In him was promise of popularity and good-fellowship, and men claimed acquaintance with him. His father's estate yielded him an income more than sufficient for his wants; and with nothing to do, this masterful son of the sea donned his first dress suit, and, under the auspices of a fad-finding aunt whose social position was impregnable, made his bow to a matured metropolitan society.

Society flocked to meet the lion. Men comprehended and liked him; he joined their yacht clubs and told them where they stood. Their wives, sisters and daughters, understanding him as little as he understood them, but influenced by masculine praise, sought his company, tried him by their tests, weighed him in their balance, and judged him by their law.

In a measure he had preserved the correctness of his speech and his taste in dress, but he lacked the unconscious knowledge of small social form which landsmen absorb with their growth and development. The formulas "come and see me," and "not at home," were truths to him at first, then lies. He resented such small evasions, but overlooked intentional and transparent deception. Across the years of his seafaring he had carried in



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his mind the childish correlation of beauty and goodness. He could see no guile in the smiling eyes of a bare-shouldered daughter of Eve whose main object in smiling was to test the strength of his armour, and who, only in her school days, could have appreciated the homage he paid to her sex in his direct replies and queries, his badly timed comments, and his tactless silences—all arising from his own shyness and embarrassment, but bearing the outward semblance of arrogance.

He was vaguely conscious from the first that in this hot-house atmosphere he was not as other men; but, proud of his manhood, and placing but a small estimate on that of these other men, he exchanged no confidences and asked no advice. His aunt could not safely be affronted, and there was no apparent lessening of the demand for his society. So the well-meaning victim of diverted development—the product of the nursery and the fore-castle—went blindly and innocently on to his punishment, trampling on small prejudice and precedent in a manner not to be forgiven.

Flushed cheeks were beyond his power of analysis; moist and angry eyes were turned away from him; just criticism never reached his ears, and his confusion increased. At last the fair lion-tamers,

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by comparing notes and by mutual encouragement, reached a verdict that even his aunt's influence could not modify. Some considered him a boor; others thought him intentionally hateful; but all agreed that he was an utterly impossible man, who smelled vilely of tobacco. Consequently they politely snubbed him; but as he was not yet able to see beneath the politeness, the lesson was lost.

Then one brave spirit pointedly ignored his street greeting and watched the effect. It needed a repetition before the sensitive self-conscious man made sure of the animus; but, when he had recovered from the shock of the experience, that particular young person ceased to exist for him. She delightedly and excitedly told the tale. Others followed suit, and soon there was a charmed circle, whose members discussed the pariah at informal meetings, and into which enthusiastic, bright-eyed aspirants eagerly sought entrance, as men seek admission to a popular club, bringing as credentials the latest tale of snub. Not to know him became a social advantage. Braisted, the more vulnerable because of his vigorous chivalry and honest intent, suffered keenly, but dumbly—and found himself utterly helpless in a warfare that youth meets with derision and reprisal.

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The clause in his indictment regarding tobacco was true. He had acquired the smoking habit at sea, and in his present idleness indulged in it frequently, through the medium of a black brier pipe, which he carried with him upon all occasions. It was before the time when pipes were admitted to good society, and he was conscientiously careful not to smoke in the presence of ladies; but his clothing was saturated with the fumes, and as he himself—like all smokers—was immune to the odour, and as no man cared to tell him, he remained blissfully unconscious of his atmosphere, until, one day, the knowledge came to him with other information in understandable terms that brought his brief career in polite society to a temporary close.

It was a girl, of course—a brown-eyed girl of stately mould and well-stored mind. She was a few years his junior; she had not sought his acquaintanceship, and, wiser than her sisters, showed no fervid desire to give it up. Hence she possessed, in time, a peculiar interest for him that bore no relation to the fact that she was wealthy in her own right and the daughter of a wealthier widow. As his sense of isolation grew upon him, he had welcomed the mute sympathy which he found in her manner and expression, and took up more of her

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time than she might have spared to another. Finally her pity for his bewilderment took the form of tuition. Yielding to the maternal instinct inherent in the sex—which prompts small girls to scold small brothers—she threw out delicate hints, which he gladly tried to profit by. But the man needed a real mother, who could do more than hint. When she touched upon his atmosphere, he smiled, unbelieving, and wondered at her imagination; for his own sense of smell—or lack of it—contradicted the gentle accusation. However, after three smokeless days he appeared before her, with hands shaking from nervous strain, and announced that he had given it up—for her. As he wore the same clothing, she had sniffed suspiciously, and, for obvious reasons, displayed no keen interest in his alleged reform. Then, in a spasm of pique, he backslid, and smoked himself into good health.

Her manner was guarded now, and it had the effect of spurring him to a blunt statement of fact, and a blunter question, to which she responded with a firmly spoken “No.” But he would not take this for an answer. Somehow, from his inadequate reading and limited experience he had evolved the futile theory that a woman’s “No”

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invariably meant "Yes," and he asked the question again and again. Had he shown less anxiety as to his fate, or less faith in the truth of the theory, he might have won by pure persistence; for it was plain that she liked him. As it was, the continuous recurrence of the never-settled question—which had become as vital to him as life itself—irritated the girl beyond endurance, and at last, on the verge of hysterics, she faced him with angry eyes, and the storm descended.

"Why do you not let me alone?" she asked. "Why should I marry you when I do not love you? More, why should I, how could I love you? Are you a gentleman? No, or you would not annoy me. Can you live, without comment or criticism, the life I am living? No. You are a slave to a filthy habit; you continually make yourself ridiculous, and have made me so while I have been trying to help you. Have you self-respect and ambition? No, or you would not be content as you are. Have you moral fibre that commands consideration? You have lied to me, pitifully and trivially, about your miserable pipe—for what object I can not guess. You have become a veritable nuisance!"

Then she burst into tears.

He turned and left her without a word. In the

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succeeding twenty-four hours he experienced all the emotions to which the human mind is susceptible except joy and anger. Her words forbade the one, her tears the other. He dealt his aunt insane reproach; and the busy, frivolous woman, judging only by externals—his handsome face and magnificent physique—wept copiously, and washed her hands of him. Then he disgustedly packed his trunk and travelled—anywhere.

With him went his pipe, and for six months it never became cold during his waking hours. It softened the discord of the bitter song in his brain, the most jarring note of which was the word “nuisance.” In the end he silenced the song, but substituted the savage judgment on himself: “Served me right. I’m an educated pig—badly educated, and wholly pig.” The last clause signified a hopelessness that robbed him even of the wish to please—which, under the peculiar circumstances, may have been good for him.

His flight from himself and his memories had carried him to the wilderness, and late one sultry afternoon, clad in a soiled outing-suit, and smoking his pipe, he stood on the beach of a Florida lagoon, studying a craft at anchor with all a sailor’s criticism. As indicated by the burgee and private sig-

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nal at the trucks, it was a yacht; and indeed, below the water-line the vessel was yacht-like enough, if her lines were an index; but above, though the craft was no larger than an ordinary schooner-yacht, were the short ends, spars and rigging of a square-rigged ship. She carried neither skysails nor stunsails, and the cabin trunk extended to the foremast, but in other respects, even to the standing spanker gaff, she was outwardly a complete miniature of the old Cape Horn clippers, and with her glossy black hull, varnished spars and sparkling brasswork, as beautiful a craft as Braisted had ever seen.

On the beach was the yacht's dingey, and on the backboard in the stern-sheets Braisted read the name, *Argonaut*. It called up recollections of yacht-club gossip concerning this craft and her owner—a fat, smooth-faced and effusive young man named Fanwood, who had not impressed him favourably when he had met him, and who seemed to be as unique among yachtsmen as the *Argonaut* was among yachts. He was—so ran the gossip—possessed of an income too large for intelligent distribution and the smallest brain-power compatible with sanity. He was a one-idea man, intensely enthusiastic about whatever occupied his mind for

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the moment, and in his way fond of outdoor sport, which prompted him to build freak yachts like the Argonaut. He spoke with a natural lisp, a very unnatural English accent, and radiated a general offensiveness, due to his limitations.

As Braisted's musings reached this point he was tapped on the shoulder and a voice spoke:

"Bwaithted, ithn't it? How d'ye do? By Jove, what bringths you down here?"

"Out to grass, Fanwood," he answered, as he turned and shook hands. "Knew you by your yacht and your musical voice. Nothing like 'em on earth. How many hands do you carry in that plaything?"

"None now—bleth the luck! I'm in a peck of twouble. Whole crew quit me yetht'day—every one. No one to cook or do anything. Can't get away. Beathly nuisance. Telegwaphed to Fernandina, Cedar Keys, St. Augustine—lots of thailor men, no captains. Can't wun her myself, you now. Bleth me, Bwaithted, what a villainous pipe! Smoke that all the time?"

"Most always," answered Braisted with a smile, as he blew more smoke to windward. "Why don't you send for a tug?"



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"Oh, that wouldn't do, don't you know; wouldn't be thporthmanlike," coughed Fanwood. "But I sent for twenty-five thailor men. Be here to-morrow."

"That's sensible. All you really want now is a skipper. Let's think. I'm under promise to—but, Fanwood, you have a party, I see—ladies, too. Any one I know?"

"Think not. Mother ith along, and a few of her fwiends. Mr. Brimm, pwesident of an anti-tobacco league, and hith thon, Eugene, and Mrs.——"

"Hold on, Fanwood; what made your crew quit you?"

"I vow I don't know. I did evwything I could for them. Sheets and pillow-cases in the berths, and tablecloths, and napkins—yeth sir, each man had his own napkin ring. Yet they thwore fwightfully before the ladies, and at last they mutinied——"

Braisted burst into a roar of laughter—the first genuine laughter he had enjoyed for months.

"Sheets and pillow-cases!" he repeated when he could. "And napkins! Anti-smoking crank aboard! Kept 'em up in their watch below to be lectured to, I suppose."

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“ But it wath all for their own good,” rejoined Fanwood.

“ Well, now, here—got a sextant and chronometer aboard? Or did your skipper furnish his own? ”

“ Gueth tho. I bought evwything.”

“ Well, you suppress the services, and I’ll take your little ship up to Fernandina, where you can look around for a skipper.”

“ You? Weally? Why, bleth me, yeth! I heard you had been a thailor. But, have you been a captain? She’s a ship, you know, and thailor men are a wough lot—hard to manage.”

“ I’m a rough lot myself,” said Braisted gravely, “ and it took me ten years to learn what I know about ships and sailors. I promised my father to give up the life; so I’ll go aboard as your guest, if you like—but, understand me, a guest with all the rights and privileges of a skipper. There must be no interference between myself and the men; and if I give an order, to a sailor or passenger, that order must be obeyed. You need a sailing-master—I need a sniff of salt air. Is it agreed? ”

“ Thertainly—thertainly, Bwaithted; and I call this a dithpenthation of Pwvidence, I weally do. Where ith your luggage? That ith a pwetty

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wocky suit you have on. Gueth the thailing-master's uniform will just fit you."

"Will it? Well, I'll not wear your livery, just the same. And as I don't go aboard to impress your guests, I'll wear this rig until my trunk comes. It's three miles inland at a hotel. I'll wire for it."

This done, they pulled off in the dingey, and on the yacht's white deck Braisted, with pipe out of sight, and mental poise steadied and strengthened by six months' immunity from shock and surprise, bore gracefully the ordeal of a sweeping introduction to Mrs. Fanwood—a portly, hook-nosed woman, who said that she was glad to know him, and looked otherwise—to Mr. Brimm, the enemy of tobacco, tall, unctuous and flabby-handed, and to his son, Eugene, a frank-faced youngster of eighteen. But when he was presented to a kind-looking, middle-aged lady at the after companionway, who announced distinctly that she was "very pleased to make his acquaintance," speech left him; and when he looked into the brown eyes of a younger, stater woman who followed up the steps, and whom the other described as "My daughter, Miss Fleming," he becamedizzy; for he had known the mother nearly as well as the daughter. The girl merely

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bowed to him, with eyes on the deck, and in his embarrassment he turned to Fanwood, who was now explaining matters to his mother and Mr. Brimm. The searching inquiry which these two made as to his record and ancestry, his habits and accomplishments, nautical and social, and as to his morals, completed his collapse, but convinced him, confused as he was, that his experience with Miss Fleming was known only to her mother.

To escape the catechism, however, he desperately asked Fanwood the location of the skipper's room—and fled. Whereupon Mrs. Fanwood averred that he talked like a fool and looked like an idiot, and that she never would permit him to take command of the yacht.

In the sailing-master's room, with heart beating painfully, Braisted mopped his forehead and sat down to collect his scattered faculties. "Pleased to make my acquaintance," he muttered. "That's my cue. Saves explaining to the rest. I understand—I'm to keep my distance. I'll keep it, by Heaven! Recognised me in the boat—I saw them—more than one woman on deck—went below to consult—and then I got that—'Pleased to make your acquaintance.' And she'll think I came aboard on her account—invited myself. And Fan-

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wood'll give it out that way. All right. I'll clear out just as quickly. I'll take a smoke, and then—the dingey."

He filled and lighted his pipe, the old rage strong upon him—the old song gathering force in his brain. "Not a gentleman," he growled to himself as he puffed savagely; "ridiculous—a liar, without moral fibre. I'm all that—yes, every bit of it; but not a nuisance. I'm d——d if I'll be a nuisance! She'll never call me that again, God—bless her!"

The reactive effect of the blessing invoked by his heart against the dictum of his brain brought him a slight measure of tranquility, and he began to take some interest in his surroundings. He noticed a triangular box on a shelf which he knew contained nothing but a sextant. Rolls of charts and a tell-tale compass hung from the carlines; on the bulkhead was a large aneroid barometer; on the desk was the closed log-book, and in a locker—or alcove in the bulkhead—the yacht's chronometer, which, on examining, he found run down. He opened the log-book. The last entry was two days old, giving the yacht's position at noon and the subsequent run to the lagoon; and in the "remarks" column was this:

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“All hands quit this ship to-day, having brought her to a safe anchorage, because, although there are enough of us to man a ship three times as big, we are not allowed to smoke even below decks.

“We believe we are justified by the customs of the sea in bringing this floating Sunday-school to port and leaving her. We take only our own clothes and property. Uniforms are in the fore-castle and officers’ rooms.

“(Signed)      JOHN BARRY, Sailing-Master.

“GEORGE EDWARDS, Mate.”

The unconscious humour of the manifesto appealed to Braisted, and he laughed softly. Then came the thought: “But—why— It’s lunacy. Whoever heard of stopping tobacco aboard ship? Fanwood’s fool enough, but he wouldn’t hold out. His mother’s no fool—she wouldn’t try. It’s Mabel, surely. She’s a reformer—though a mighty poor one—and she’s undoubtedly behind this—with the old man to back her up, perhaps. How, though? What’s her hold on Fanwood? What’s she doing aboard this yacht?”

A pang of jealousy whitened his face for a moment; but though it displaced the last trace of his

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anger, it left all the antagonism of hopelessness. Gulping down a disconsolate exclamation, he turned toward the door and his eyes rested on the barometer. The reading startled him: the indicator marked below twenty-nine. He shook the instrument, but there was no change; in another alcove he found a mercurial barometer which agreed with it, and he sought the deck, but not the dingey.

It was about six o'clock in the evening, and the sun, a blood-red ball, was setting in an opaque bank over the land. The sultriness of the air had become a humid stagnation which seemed to oppress the breathing. What tide came and went in the bay was now at slack water, and on the flat mirror the little ship hovered over her anchor with chain up-and-down from the hawse-pipe, while the crashing of surf on the sea-beach of the Barrier sounded faintly—as though from double the distance. These were signs of a coming storm—not many hours away.

Braisted reversed his decision to leave.

There was no immediate way of learning how much chain was out, but he lifted over and cock-billed the other anchor—an easy task for his broad shoulders—and after satisfying himself that the inner ends of the chains were secured in the locker,

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he procured a hand-lead and tested the bottom—walking along the rail from bow to stern, paying no attention to the silent observers under the after awning. It was hard and soft in spots, and his misgivings were confirmed by an inspection of the charts, which said that this bay was “Poor anchorage—shallow beds of sand over coral,” and also told him that Captain Barry had chosen the best spot available. Then, as a final precaution against trouble in the darkness of night, he went aft again and took the bearings of the inlet by the deck compass near the wheel. His activity and preoccupied manner moved Fanwood to ask what troubled him.

“Bad weather coming,” he answered as he emptied his pipe over the taffrail and looked from one to another of the group. “I don’t like to disturb you, but this is the hurricane season, and we may be piled up on the Barrier before morning. Look there.”

He pointed to the growing bank to the westward, and all but Miss Fleming stood erect to look. She remained seated, intent upon a book.

“If I had a crew,” he continued, “I should warp out through the inlet, where there is sea-room to take it. Next best plan is to haul over to the mainland and make the cables fast to the trees.



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Do you gentlemen care to try it? It's a long, hard job."

"Bleth me, no!" said Fanwood. "It ith altogether too laborious. Why can't we thtay where we are?"

"I see no occasion for alarm," said Mrs. Fanwood pompously. "It looks like rain—that is all. And we are safe at anchor—safe in port, I might say. You surely can know but little of the sailor's calling, Mr. Braisted, if you advocate leaving port with a storm coming. Captain Barry, villain that he was, would not have thought of it."

"It is useless to argue about what I know, Mrs. Fanwood. I judge by the log-book that Captain Barry was a good seaman. He doubtless had sufficient reason for quitting this craft. But I blame the man for leaving you over bad holding ground. I shall drop the other anchor, and when the wind comes will pay out all the chain. The anchors may possibly hold. If they drag, however, I shall slip both chains and try to steer through the inlet."

"You shall do nothing of the kind, sir!" rejoined Mrs. Fanwood. "The idea! And what do you mean, sir, by such comment on Captain Barry's mutinous desertion of us? What do you mean, sir?"

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“Young man,” interrupted Mr. Brimm patronizingly, “it is really a little surprising that you should attempt to terrorize these ladies in this manner. True, you may be alarmed yourself, but you surely would not be were you the seafaring man you announce yourself. I have crossed the ocean many times. Believe me, sir, there is no danger——”

“Fanwood,” Braisted interrupted warmly, “there’s a log-book entry that will make you the laughing-stock of every yacht club from here to Halifax. Why did you forbid smoking? Were you crazy? Stop sailors’ pay and they’ll take their ship out of danger. Stop their grub, and they’ll growl, but work. Stop their tobacco, and you’ll have open mutiny. Women don’t know any better, but you ought.”

“Mr. Braisted, your language is insufferable!” spluttered Mrs. Fanwood.

“Very sorry, madam, but I’m about done talking.”

“Bwaithted,” said her son with all his scant dignity, “you should wemember that as my guest you should be governed by the wules of courtethy common to gentlemen—which a mere thailing-mathter is not thupposed to pwactice.”

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“Perfectly right, Mr. Fanwood,” he answered in a white heat. “But I am not a gentleman” (the girl with the book made no sign); “neither am I your sailing-master or your guest. I’m the ‘dith-penthation of Pwvidence,’ which you called me. If these ladies will go ashore, I’ll go too, and stay there. If not, I remain here and see them out of this scrape.”

He started forward, and as he passed the boy, Eugene’s eye caught his for a moment. It closed slowly in a deliberate wink, which the others did not see, and his own eyes gave thanks for the sympathy.

“I order you to leave my boat at once,” stormed Fanwood. “You are forthing yourthelf on people who do not want your thothiety. You mean to eat my food while you inthult my mother and my gueths. You get into that boat and go! Eugene will row you ashore.”

He had presented an extreme view of the case, which momentarily affected Braisted. He turned and looked back at the group, half-minded to accede. But a pair of brown eyes decided him. She had looked at him as she might have looked at the mainmast, with no show of interest or approval; but for this he would stand by her—and the others.

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### PART II

As Braisted leaned against the low brass rail, trembling with excitement, Mrs. Fleming came forward, followed by Mr. Brimm, who, however, halted at a polite distance as the lady accosted the new sailing-master.

“Pardon me,” she said abruptly. “I judge by your manner and your somewhat slighting reference to women that you consider us responsible for the desertion of the crew. In a measure we were, as we expressed freely our abhorrence of tobacco, and this, no doubt, strongly influenced Mr. Fanwood. My husband died of tobacco heart, and my son of excessive cigarette smoking, as you know” (Braisted did not know); “so you can easily understand the attitude of myself and daughter toward the habit; but I assure you, Mr. Braisted, that I did all in my power to prevent this foolish prohibition. I know well the mastery which smoking obtains over sailors, and the irritation consequent on any sudden deprivation.”

What Braisted might have said in reply was forestalled by the approach of Mr. Brimm, who had drawn near enough to hear the last remark.

“A slavish, vile and unclean vice,” he said

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didactically. "A little effort of will—a little regard for the cleanliness which is next to godliness, and the habit could be overcome."

"Mr. Brimm," protested the lady, while Braisted stared hard at the speaker, "this gentleman is a—this gentleman says that he is a hard smoker. Please consider the subject closed. Now, Mr. Braisted, tell me plainly. Are we in danger? Do you think it advisable for us to go ashore? I proposed this to my daughter just now, but she resolutely refuses to go."

"Mrs. Fleming," he answered earnestly, "no man can tell the strength of coming wind. The barometer is below twenty-nine; there is a hurricane brewing; there is treacherous holding-ground beneath us, a stretch of shallow water to leeward wide enough to raise a vicious sea, and a low sand-spit out there over which this sea would dash and wash us all into the ocean; for if the yacht drags, and strikes a hard spot, she will go to pieces. This much I know; but I do not know that the anchors will not hold. If they do not, I shall slip them and endeavour to run to sea."

"Young man," said Mr. Brimm sternly, "enough of this childish and cowardly croaking! You shall not frighten trusting and dependent

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women in this manner. You have been ordered off this yacht, and you remain. I have come to enforce the order. Go. I command you."

"You do? Well, I disobey your command." Braisted's voice was quiet, but ominously high-pitched.

Mr. Brimm advanced a step toward him, and for a moment both men, equal in size and weight, threatened, with their eyes, while Mrs. Fleming clasped her hands and stepped back. But it came to nothing. Mr. Brimm, possibly thinking of the better part of valour, turned away, and said, "Come, Mrs. Fleming. It is useless to bandy words with this ruffian."

And with no further word the lady accompanied him; but Braisted was past feeling hurt. Moreover, he half believed he had been named correctly. Yet underneath it all was a slight increment of humiliation in the thought that Mabel Fleming added to her indictment a distrust of his seamanship—his one strong point.

Beyond watching his movements, the party aft paid him no further attention, and while the light of the evening lasted he walked about, familiarizing himself with the running-gear and deck-fittings. He climbed aloft and out the jib-boom to

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loosen and rehitch gaskets; he descended to the chain locker, unshackled the ends of the chains, and secured them in a manner to be quickly slipped; then, as the blackness covered the sky, he lighted the side lights and binnacle, as well as a few deck-lanterns, which he left in the lamp locker.

During this time he had heard the sound of dishes below deck, and knew that they were eating a meal to which he was not invited; but when he had hoisted the dingey—which he had left to the last for possible use—lashed it and the other boats, and rigged in the swinging booms, he descended the fore-hatch, burst in a door leading to the galley, and helped himself to what he found. Then he lighted his pipe, noticing that his tobacco was getting low, and walked the forward deck—watching and waiting.

About ten o'clock a slight figure crept forward in the darkness. It was the youth, Eugene.

“All turned in aft?” asked Braisted.

“Yes, sir; and I turned out. Did you find something to eat? Heard you smashing things. Might have asked you to dinner, at least.”

“Haven't much use for me, I'm afraid,” drawled Braisted; “but tell me, boy, why are they

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all so dead set against common sense? I gave good reasons for expecting trouble to-night."

"It's Lady Fanwood. She'll scald you yet, or poison you. She won't be told anything, and you dared to. Fanwood's a soft lunatic, but she's vicious, and just as crazy. The Governor's all right when you're on to his curves, but he's with the powers that be, every time; and the Flemings are all right—except about 'baccy. They're all lunny on that point."

"No wonder the crew finally rebelled and quit," said Braisted with a laugh.

"Yes, and Fanwood went through the fore-castle and threw overboard all the old pipes and stray tobacco the men had left. Then they burned sulphur candles to fumigate it. Crazy—crazy as bugs."

Braisted thought of his nearly empty tobacco pouch, and his reserve stock ashore, wondering when he would see it.

"Boy," he said after a moment's silence, "do you or the others know the ropes?"

"The Governor doesn't, and I don't think Fanwood does; but I know most of 'em—all I could learn, so far, in the cruise. Always wanted to go to sea."



## *The Nuisance*

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“Can you loose the foretopmast-staysail, clear away the downhaul, and find the halyards—all in the dark?”

“Yes, sir; I know I can.”

“We’ll need that sail quickly, if we have to slip.”

“I’ll help all I can, Mr. Braisted. Shall I stay with you?”

“No; go and turn in. I’ll call you all if necessary.”

The hurricane found Braisted with his hand on the windlass lever. It was midnight when it came, with no lightning or thunder, but with a steady downpour of rain that lasted ten minutes and drenched him in one. Then followed the wind, a succession of hot blasts which soon merged into a continuous pressure. As the yacht swung head to it, he let the chain run to the end, and dropped the other anchor, for he felt what he had feared—the jarring vibration of the deck which tells of a dragging anchor. Holding back the lever, he allowed this chain to go as fast as it would, and in three minutes a surging of the windlass said that this anchor had bit the ground at the full length of the chain. But to no purpose; there was no lessening of the tremors in the deck, and before the

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furious rush of wind the yacht drove sternward, with her anchors, side by side, bounding, catching, and bounding again. Then there was a sudden stop to the vibrations—a creaking, grinding, straining sound from the windlass, barely distinguishable above the screaming in the rigging; then two sharp shocks, one after the other, and the chains forward of the windlass dropped to the deck and rose again. Both anchors had hooked to some solid ridge of coral, and both chains had parted. Turning toward the forehatch, Braisted met the boy struggling up against the wind.

“We’re adrift,” he shouted in his ear, for the sound aloft was now a buzzing roar. “Loose the foretopmast staysail while I slip the chains. Stand clear as they go out the hawse-pipes. Hold on to the downhaul till we’re ready to hoist.”

The boy answered and climbed out the bowsprit. Before he came in Braisted had released the two ends of chain, regained the deck, fastened the sheet and tautened the halyards. Then they set the small sail—an easy pull for the boy in fine weather, but a task for Braisted’s giant strength now; for the yacht had swung broadside to the wind, and was nearly on her beam ends. There was no time to flatten the sheet. Both hurried aft;

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Braisted shouted in the boy's ear to stand near him and watch for the inlet; for he, at the wheel, would be blinded by the binnacle light.

He saw indistinctly in the darkness two figures in the after companionway as he took the wheel and ground it up; and he heard voices in questioning inflection; but he answered not, and as the vessel payed off and righted, bringing a flood of rain and spindrift into the companionway, the doors were shut.

Braisted never steered straighter; but, doubtful of a compass course picked up after so much sternway, he repeatedly shouted to Eugene, and at last was answered.

"There's a long flicker of white ahead, and to starboard," called the boy as he came close, "and it's all black to port, and farther over it's white again."

"Breakers on the Barrier," he answered, shifting the wheel. "Steady me for the black water."

"Now you're right—steady!" sang out the boy, and Braisted met the yacht's swing and steered the new course. Soon there was a wild turmoil of surf, and seas climbed aboard; a tugging at the rudder, telling of shallow water, and an up-

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roar of sound over which Braisted could just hear the scream of the boy, "Port, sir!—hard a-port!" He obeyed the warning as he could, for it seemed that giants stronger than himself had hold of the rudder. The yacht quivered in the undertow and eddies, then shook herself clear and went on into the blackness, while the crashing sound of breaking seas gave way to the steady humming of the hurricane.

They were at sea, but with the Bahamas forty miles to the eastward—a lee-shore for a hundred miles of nothing. Putting the wheel to starboard, and lashing it, Braisted watched the craft steady herself nearly in the trough of the crisp, fast-rising sea. Then, telling the boy to clear away the spanker gear, he opened the companionway and descended into the lighted after cabin. They were all there, hurriedly dressed, and they met him with a chorus of protest.

"Why do you come down here, thir, all dwiping wet?" demanded Fanwood. "If you like to thtay out in the wain, do tho, but please have the conthiderwation——"

"What has happened, Mr. Braisted?" asked Mrs. Fleming anxiously.

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“Chains parted; slipped them, and got her over the bar. We’re outside now.”

“You slipped the chains after I forbade you?” stormed Mrs. Fanwood. “Then I command you, sir, to take this yacht right back.”

“Impossible, madam.—Fanwood, I want help on deck. The yacht must carry sail whether she will or not. With the maintopsail, spanker, and foretopmast-staysail on her, I think she’ll skim up the shore in fairly smooth water. The boy’s a born sailor, but he isn’t strong. You and Mr. Brimm come up.”

“No, I won’t. Why didn’t you wait for the thailors?”

“I am unfamiliar with what you ask of me, sir,” said Mr. Brimm. “Can you not dispense with my presence?”

“No, I can not!” said Braisted angrily. “You ought to be ashamed. Afraid of getting wet, with women depending on you! Get up on deck, the pair of you! I’ve no time or patience to waste. Up with you!”

He collared Fanwood, shook him, and launched him toward the stairs. In transit, he lurched heavily against Miss Fleming, who was seated, and Braisted found grace to say, “I beg your pardon,

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Miss Fleming." Then he turned to Mr. Brimm. "Will you go?" he asked in that ominous, high-pitched voice.

"No, sir; I will not."

Braisted picked up a chair and held it poised above his head. "I can conquer you and carry you up," he said, "but, as I told you, I haven't time. Start—quickly—or I'll——"

But before he could finish the sentence Mr. Brimm had scurried up the companionway and joined Fanwood on deck.

"If I catch you two soldiering any more to-night I'll have no mercy on you; now clap on to that spanker outhaul," called Braisted as he emerged from the companionway.

With their united strength they set the sail, and when Braisted had trimmed the sheet he drove them forward to flatten down the foretopmast-staysail, which was shaking dangerously from the yacht's closer angle to the wind. But it was not close enough, and the leeway was more than the headway. So, after pointing the yards—Braisted slacking away, and the boy finding the lee braces for the others—they set the maintrysail; then Braisted climbed and loosed the maintopsail, descended to help on the reef-tackles—for the

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yacht was scuppers under now, and he feared to carry the whole sail—and, with much menacing with a white-ash heaver, haled the two landsmen aloft to reef. The boy went willingly, but not so the others. As for Braisted, the spirit of the sea was upon him, and he justified himself by the ethics of his old calling—which takes no regard of personal feelings when work is to be done—and by the fact that below was a haughty and disdainful young woman who, when he entered the cabin, had appealed to him—with her eyes—but had given him scorn when he threw Fanwood at her.

On the yard he did most of the work, for even the courageous and quick-witted boy was too much bewildered by the surroundings to do more than knot reef-points after Braisted, by main strength, had passed both earings; and the other two, though they had gone out on the foot-rope to escape the proddings of Braisted's heaver, while there had surrendered completely to the terrors of the night—the black void beneath, the furious buffeting of wind and horizontal rain, the humming in their ears which prevented their understanding Braisted's roaring orders, and their unstable foothold on a slippery rope which slanted at an angle of nearly

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forty-five degrees. Braisted pushed them along to the rigging on his way to the lee earing, and left them there while he and the boy finished the job. Then they all descended, hauled home the sheets with a watch-tackle, and hoisted the yard by means of the windlass.

With the helm a-lee, the little ship now luffed, lost way, fell off and gathered it, swinging within three points of the compass; and Braisted, satisfied with her balance, put the boy—who said he could steer—at the wheel to steady her, hove the log with the aid of the others, and went below to the chart, which showed him that if the wind held as it was the yacht's drift and headway would take her clear of the outermost of the Bahama shoals. But what content might have come to him from this was nullified by the discovery that his small store of tobacco was ruined by the salt spindrift picked up by the wind. He was wet, tired and chilled, and wanted a smoke. A thorough search brought none to light in the sailing-master's room; neither was there any in the mate's apartment, and with a heartfelt malediction on Fanwood he marked the log-book up to date and went on deck.

"Fanwood and dad have gone down," said Eugene, as he joined him.



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"All right. Let 'em stay there. Go down yourself, boy, and close all deadlights. Then change your clothes and get oilskins on, if you've got 'em. I'll want you on deck for a lookout. You can sleep to-morrow. Tell the women we're all right, and that they can safely turn in."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the boy, proud of the trust in him, as he relinquished the wheel.

"Deadlights all closed," he reported when he appeared, clad in yellow oilskins. "Don't you want some dry clothes, sir? Lots aboard."

Braisted did not. He wanted tobacco, and wanted it tenfold because he could not get it. And so he suffered through the night in his thin out-ing suit, for the wind now blew cold, and listened to such comment as Eugene, keeping watch beside him, could deliver over the noise of the wind and sea. Part of this comment was upon the fact that a "fat fool like Fanwood should dare aspire to a level-headed girl like Mabel Fleming."

As Braisted had been guilty of the same ambition, and as fellow-feeling does not always conduce to sympathy, his attitude toward Fanwood became such as to frighten that gentleman into speechless and immediate compliance with his wishes. When he appeared after breakfast, and hesitatingly in-

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quired of the bareheaded, bedraggled and dishevelled man at the wheel as to the yacht's destination, he was not answered, but was sternly ordered to see that his meals were cooked, and served—hot—on the dining-room table. Fanwood hastened to obey, and as his mother virtuously and indignantly refused to cook for “the brute,” and as Mrs. Fleming was ill from the excitement, the duty devolved upon her daughter; but Braisted did not know this.

The call to breakfast came from the boy when he relieved him at the wheel, and as the naturally embarrassed young woman failed to hear and respond to his half-hearted “good-morning” when they met at the companionway, he ascribed to the failure a personal animus, and thenceforth ignored her presence. But he was keenly alive to the presence of the others. He directed Fanwood, under penalty of a rope's-ending, to search the ship for tobacco, and on Fanwood's reporting later that there was none to be found, berated him luridly.

To Mrs. Fleming, when she appeared on deck, supported by her daughter, he deprecated almost pathetically the inhuman tyranny that would deprive a sailor of tobacco, and when Mrs. Fanwood interrupted, argued with her on questions ranging from social ethics to seamanship. In this debate

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he was forced to yield the last word; for the lady, clad in a warm, though condemned, fur-lined circular, suffered no diminution of her extensive vocabulary, while Braisted, weakened from fatigue and want of sleep, drenched to the skin, blue about the lips, and shivering with cold, had entered the dispute only from extreme irritation.

The boy came up at noon, and would have remained through the day, but Braisted, after another well-cooked meal, sent him back, saying that he would need him all night.

The wind had gradually veered to the north, and immense gray combers were coming down the coast, lifting the small vessel to the full pressure of the blast on their crests, and dropping her deep in the hollows, where the becalmed maintopsail flapped idly against the mast. The land to the west was now a thin line of blue, and to the east a rising island threatened danger.

At supper-time Braisted had decided to wear ship, and had taken cross-bearings as an aid to his future reckoning, when a sudden backing of the wind to the northwest induced him to hold the ship on the port tack pending developments.

At ten o'clock they came—a blast of icy wind out of the northeast that nearly caught the ship

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aback, and as she payed off, a beam sea that threw the little craft nearly on her beam ends and occasionally swamped her. It was imperative now that she be put on the other tack, and, expecting trouble with his crew, Braisted gave the wheel to the boy and sent a thundering "Wear ship!" down the companionway.

There was no direct response, and he descended. Excepting Miss Fleming, they were all there. The cabin table had fetched away and with the chairs was down to leeward, while in the cleared space men and women alike stood quaking in frank fear. Braisted drove the two men on deck, voicing his opinion of them in severe language, and citing to Mr. Brimm the manly conduct of Eugene as an example to recreant fatherhood. He put them at the weather braces, and the boy to leeward to slack away. Then by skilful steering before the wind he aided them in swinging the yards, attending to the spanker himself, after grinding the wheel down to round to. While in this position—the ship nearly in the trough, the spanker jibed and straining on the sheet, and the wheel lashed down—a great gray wall lifted up in the darkness on the starboard quarter, dropped aboard, and washed Braisted to the mizzen rigging, to which he clung.

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As the sea crashed over the yacht, a figure in a fur-lined circular, just emerging from the companionway, was also caught, upset, and shot head-first and face downward half through the bars of the low brass railing which extended from bow to stern. Braisted heard a gasping scream, and struggled to the spot just in time to catch a firm grip on a plump ankle before another sea rolled over the ship.

"Take the wheel, boy," he roared. "Steady her—by the wind."

He heard the boy's answer, and saw him speeding aft in the darkness. Then, securing the other ankle, he exerted his strength, and landed his catch, a bedraggled heap, on the deck. Inserting his fingers into the tightly buttoned collar, he lifted her to her feet, and marched her, still choking and gasping, to the companionway.

"Now, then, old lady," he shouted in her ear as he pushed her down, "I've saved your life. Let me alone after this. Get off the deck, and stay off!"

Eugene at the wheel had the yacht under command. Leaving him there, he trimmed over the foretopmast-staysail sheet, and with the help of the others pointed the yards to the wind. Then he sent them down, complaining bitterly of his bru-

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tality. The yacht now took the head sea easily, and as Braisted seated himself for a few moments' rest on the cabin trunk, Mrs. Fleming came up and approached him.

"I have been—this has come to light, Mr. Braisted," she said; "will you accept it? It is apparent that you need it." She handed him a package of tobacco.

"Bless you for this, Mrs. Fleming!" he answered, rising eagerly. "Yes—thank you! Thank you ever so much! I can smoke my pipe now. It's nearly twenty-four hours since I've had a smoke."

Mrs. Fleming went below, and Braisted lighted his pipe in the galley, coming back to tell the boy all about it, and to violate the traditions of the sea by smoking at the wheel. Although the tobacco almost flamed in the fierce wind, and the hot smoke burned the tongue of the smoker, it was blessed tobacco he was consuming, and he was happy. Thus they steered, watched and talked through the night, cementing for life the friendship begun in the sympathy of the youth, and which only their common tastes, likes and dislikes made possible. Braisted, magnanimous from his victory over the elements, was at peace with the world, even though he had been on his feet for forty-eight

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hours, and carried a rime of white salt on his hair, eyebrows, and mustache. He called down blessings on Mrs. Fleming; he forgave Fanwood—and his mother—and Mr. Brimm—yes, and the girl, whom he loved in spite of himself, even though she had called him a nuisance.

“She can’t, by any possible excuse,” he mused, “call me that again.”

But she did.

And though he had forgiven Mrs. Fanwood, that lady had not forgiven him. The wind moderated before morning, and he and the boy shook out the reef and put the sails on, one after the other. At breakfast-time the party came up, and Braisted, examining the nearby coast with the binoculars, found Mrs. Fanwood at his elbow.

“So,” she snapped, “I am to get off the deck and stay off, am I? I heard that much—I heard that, you low-bred rowdy! I’ll see if there is law in the land for you!” And down below she flounced before he could reply.

Nor had Mr. Brimm forgiven him. As Braisted stood at the wheel a little later, that gentleman, while the others were out of hearing, approached with emotion in his face that had not shown there when being disciplined.

## *Shipmates*

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“There are certain requirements, sir,” he said haltingly, “in the way of consideration for others’ rights which, of course, none but a gentleman may understand. But there is law in the land, and, believe me, sir, in spite of your brutal mastery of the sailor’s calling, and the service you have undoubtedly done this party of people, the law is intended to restrict such practices as you are guilty of; and if, by chance, we meet again, I shall esteem it my duty to my fellow-men to give you all the rope necessary, and, when you have convicted yourself, to invoke this law as quickly as possible.”

“What are you driving at?” asked Braisted in amazement.

“I think I have said all that is needful. Good-morning.”

If Fanwood forgave him, he gave no sign. The emergency past, Braisted moderated his voice and manner, and Fanwood need not have crept about the deck of his own yacht, too frightened to speak—of the law, or other matters.

A meridian observation gave Braisted his latitude at noon, and under a smiling sky the little yacht crept toward St. Augustine Inlet, picked up a tug at the entrance, and was towed up to



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the city. Braisted and the boy clewed up the sails on the way, letting them hang in the buntlines, and when the yacht was docked, the tired man sent a telegram for his trunk and collapsed, staggering to the sailing-master's room like one drunk.

He had been awake sixty hours, and so he slept until nine o'clock of the following morning, waking at the sound of a trunk being rolled into the room by a man who said he was the newly engaged ship-keeper. He was stiff and sore from the exposure; but a hot soaking and rubbing down in Fanwood's bath-room freshened him, and fresh clothing gave him the appearance of a gentleman, though he may not have felt that he had earned the title. As he gained the deck, the ship-keeper informed him that his breakfast was in the dining-room.

"The leddy heard ye movin' sir, an' got it ready," he said.

Braisted ate it alone, wondering who had cooked it; then rising, and starting for the companionway, faced Miss Fleming, standing in the after doorway.

"Good-morning, Mr. Braisted," she said, with a tremor in her voice. "Mother is still in her

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room—too ill to rise; and the others have gone ashore. There was no one but me to cook your breakfast.”

“I thank you, Miss Fleming,” he answered, as he bowed courteously. “It was a good breakfast, and I enjoyed it. And it must be, from the familiar taste of the coffee, that I have eaten your cooking before.” He wondered where his old fear of this girl had gone.

“You had to have food,” she said with a little smile, “or you could not have done what you did—big and strong and brave as you are. And all the others but Eugene were against you.”

“All the others,” he repeated vacantly.

“All but Eugene and myself. Can’t you see?” She advanced, flushed in the face, and nervously fingered the rumpled cloth upon the table before her. “Can’t you see that I want to be forgiven? I would not leave the yacht, hoping to talk with you. Didn’t you know? But everything went wrong. I know I made a face when Mr. Fanwood stepped on my toes; I didn’t mean to. And you never looked at me again. I never forgot your face, John, when you went away—and you never came back. And since then I’ve learned to think differently about some things.

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“And I’ve lost all my self-respect,” she went on, half crying, “or I should not be saying these things. Yes, everything that I denounced in you, except the smoking habit, I possess myself. I am without moral fibre; I stole the tobacco from Mr. Brimm’s room. I thought he might have forgotten to throw it all away; so I went back to the gentlemen’s cabin while he was at dinner and found some. I feared Mr. Brimm might suspect me, and so I told him that I had seen you come out of his room. I knew he couldn’t hurt you, and that you wouldn’t care. You don’t, do you? He certainly must think you stole it.”

“He does,” said Braisted with an abandoned grin, “and threatens law.”

“And then,” went on the girl, with downcast eyes, “I came up to give it to you—I was going to force you to speak to me—and to keep dry I put on Mrs. Fanwood’s circular, and I wouldn’t let the tobacco get wet, so I couldn’t save myself, but you did, and——”

“Great Scott!” exclaimed Braisted. “Was that you?”

“Didn’t I look ridiculous—pulled feet first through a fence? Yes, and you were terribly rude, and she’ll never forgive you, for she heard you, and

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knew you thought that I was she. Mr. Braisted—please—stop—I'll call mother. I will. Please don't. Oh, you are a nuisance!"

But the man had got his arm around her waist, and kissed her.

## THE FOOL KILLER

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ORIGINALLY designed for the use of a wealthy man—as a racing machine—she had shown wonderful speed on her trial trip, and this, with the insolvency of her prospective buyer, had induced the builder to offer her to the Government. The Government bought her and gave her as foster-mother the sea-going battleship Argyll. She was about fifty-five feet long, of the very lightest construction, two thousand indicated horse-power, and trial-trip speed of thirty-three knots, with power to generate superhot steam in cold-water tubes in four minutes from the time a match was applied to her automatic-feed oil fuel. A dockyard made her a bed on the Argyll's superstructure, fitted her with four strong eyebolts in which to hook a hoisting bridle, gave her a turtleback over the bow—for looks only, as it covered nothing—a closed conning-tower, a closed boiler-room for forced draft, leaving the tiller free in an open cockpit and the tiller chains exposed, planted a torpedo tube in her stern

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with a Whitehead inside, and called her a third-class torpedo boat attached to the Argyll as a tender. The Argyll's crew hoisted her aboard, and later tried her, but with her change of trade her good reputation left her.

A crew was given her: Mr. Felton, a junior lieutenant, to command, a quartermaster to steer, two machinists to handle her engines, and two trained experts from the torpedo division to work the torpedoes. In a month all were replaced. The oil feed blew up, burning their clothes and their cuticle; boiler tubes blew out and scalded them; tiller ropes parted at full speed and she rammed a dock, throwing all hands high and dry with fractures and dislocations; the Whitehead jammed in the tube and the powder charge burst the breech, ruining the lieutenant's new coat and his eyesight; and finally, when a sea-cock opened of its own sweet will, sinking her at the swinging boom in ten fathoms, the first crew begged off. She was raised, refitted, and with her second crew behaved no better; so they hoisted her to her bed on the superstructure, christened her the Fool Killer, and the captain appointed Finnegan, the ship's butt, as caretaker, and washed his hands of both; for Finnegan was equally useless. But in his new charge Finnegan displayed

## *The Fool Killer*

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great pride when sober, spending much time scouring her brasswork and puttering over her fittings; and when he finally reported—somewhat unsteadily—to the captain that he had repaired all breaks and made her seaworthy and shipshape, the latter gravely appointed him captain of the torpedo boat and sent him below rejoicing.

And with Finnegan rejoicing and the ship's company guying him the Argyll charged around the Cape of Good Hope to the antipodes, where international intrigue required her presence. Before she arrived intrigue had given way to ponderously polite notes, notes to ultimatums, ultimatums to requests for ministerial passports, and the world had risen to witness a war. But the Argyll, far from her last despatches, knew nothing of the later developments, so it can hardly be considered her fault, or that of Lieutenant Felton—officer of the deck at the time—that she blundered into a squadron of the enemy's ships containing one battleship as heavy as herself. The rest were armoured and protected cruisers, four in all, none of which could have withstood the Argyll's secondary battery; but the battleship was a serious proposition.

It would have been unjust in a captain—responsible for his being officer of the deck in his

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half-blind condition—to blame Lieutenant Felton. He had sent word below, on the authority of the sharp-eyed quartermaster at his side, of the sighting of the ships; and as his superiors—dallying over their Christmas dinner, unaware of hostilities begun—paid no attention, he had reported again, with the enemy five miles nearer. This ended his duty under the regulations, but he might have done more had he been himself. He was not himself; he was suffering keenly from doubt and regret and remorse. He had sent Finnegan—poor old Finnegan, beloved and belittled of all hands—down to the sick-bay with a request to the surgeon for some eye-water to relieve the pain in his eyes; and when Finnegan, smelling of whisky, and vacantly forgetful of his errand to the sick-bay, was caught wandering about the superstructure an hour later, he had sent again for eye-water by a responsible messenger, and then learning that Finnegan had pilfered a bottle of sick-bay whisky and escaped with no reference to eye-water, Mr. Felton had angrily punished him by sending him over the side in a “bosun’s chair” with a swab and a bucket. A later sight of the empty “bosun’s chair” swinging against the side had aroused Mr. Felton’s doubts, and a wholesale and unavailing search for Finne-



## *The Fool Killer*

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gan by the whole watch on deck failing to bring him to light had aroused his regret and remorse. The poor old fellow was miles astern, surely; hence Mr. Felton's condition of mind.

But his condition of mind was of small importance compared with that of his superiors when they appeared on the bridge. Mr. Clarkson, the executive officer, jauntily examined the oncoming ships through the binoculars, Mr. Ryerson, the torpedo lieutenant, joked him about his eyes, and the captain listened—pained and astonished—as he told of the fate of Finnegan; but before a word of censure or comfort could come to Mr. Felton, the executive had shouted: “Battle-flags! Look at them! They're stripped for action! War must be on!”

“Quarters, Mr. Clarkson,” tersely remarked the captain. “No time to strip;” and then, in a kindly tone to Mr. Felton: “I know how you feel, but—there will be more than Finnegan. Remain on the bridge as my aid.”

A gun on the leading craft—evidently the flagship—had spoken while the captain was talking; and for a short time the battleship seemed to quiver with internal motion as men sprang to stations and machinery moved. Mr. Clarkson, first

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lieutenant, went to the forward turret; the navigating officer arrived on the bridge, where, with the torpedo lieutenant, he belonged during an action; and Mr. Felton entered the conning-tower. Here he was to transmit orders to telephones and speaking-tubes until the others were driven from the bridge.

As the captain had said, there was no time to strip ship for action. Guns could be manned, compartments closed, steam generated in auxiliary boilers, hose stretched out and pumps started; but the stowing of ventilators, anchors and davits, the knocking down of wooden bulkheads, and the throwing overboard of the boats, could not be thought of. Thus, high over all, snug in her chocks under the great steam crane which had hoisted her, lay the Fool Killer, unharmed by the furious hail of shot and shell which battered the ship.

The initial gun was followed by others from the four ships, which the Argyll answered. She was but a mile and a half away from her enemies, and at this short distance there was hardly need of range-finders. Few shots from either side went wild, and the Argyll rang like a boiler-shop. The fire was from port broadsides, and the hostile squad-

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ron maintained the mile and a half distance while it circled at full speed in a single column around the Argyll, which, with engines working just enough for steerage-way, turned slowly in her tracks like a huge wild animal fighting for life.

But the God of Battles was with the Argyll that day. As understood among her well-trained officers and crew, large shot and shell fire were never wasted on cruisers. Thirteen-inch projectiles were meant only for battleships, and the four large turret guns were trained on her solid-walled prototype, who showed no sign of suffering as yet, and replied with an equal weight of metal against the Argyll's armour and turrets, while she drilled her soft ends and superstructure with a furious storm of steel from her lighter batteries. But the Argyll's eight-inch, six-inch, and secondary guns that would bear were divided up against the three cruisers; and this comparatively light fire was the first to produce results. It was marksmanship and good smokeless powder that did it; for when gunners can see their targets, and can send small shells through sponson and turret apertures to explode against the opposite walls, effects are complete. The rear ship of the column, with gun-fire stilled, belching smoke from all ports and hatches, and

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steering wildly, as though from damaged rudder gear, reeled out of range, and soon burst into flame.

Mr. Felton sent the news down a speaking-tube, and heard shouts of gladness as the news spread in the depths; then came an injunction up the tube from the officer at the central station to "hurry up and finish the rest, as the ship was a floating morgue"; and he repeated sadly the captain's remark, "There will be more than Finnegan."

The captain and the two officers had remained on the bridge, sheltered from the whistling shells by the double walls of the conning-tower; but now the shattering among them of the stricken starboard search-light induced them to enter the tower and close the door. Here they learned the news from below.

"True enough, Mr. Felton," answered the captain, as with strained, white face he peered through an observation slit. "And I can never get accustomed to this killing. It is horrid, and—and, too, I am—I was a little upset. There, there! See, the flagship is ablaze!"

They looked, and verified the assertion; the flagship was a splendid craft—high-sided and sym-

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metrical, fit to lead in international parades—but surely doomed now for fighting out of her class. She had suddenly burst into a red mass of flame amidships which seemed to feed on steel, so fiercely it raged. And while they looked the noise grew quieter; there was less of the boiler-shop sound in the clanging and crashing of projectiles, and they peered through other peepholes. The battleship was still hammering them, but the remaining cruiser, apparently still intact, was showing them her stern and giving steam to her engines. She was wise just in time; no greyhound should fight a bulldog.

And gunners cheered while they again changed their aim, and soon wrought marked results on the battleship. Something—no one knew what, though later all the big turret crews claimed the credit—happened to the two heavy guns forward on board the enemy. They swung in open barbettes, not turrets, and were vulnerable to a bursting charge just above; yet it hardly seemed probable that any shell exploding in the air could swing those two guns around until they pointed to starboard, and elevate them at different angles. This much only was seen, and that the guns did not come back. But a broadside of eight-inch, two

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stern guns of thirteen-inch, and a whole masked battery of smaller calibre guns were still at work, and demanded attention.

With but one antagonist it was wisest now that the Argyll move faster, and Mr. Felton, at the captain's order, signalled "Full speed" to the engine-room; also, to satisfy his misgivings, the lieutenant asked Mr. Clarkson, in the forward turret, if Finnegan had reported at his station there. The answer was negative.

Still maintaining their broadside bearings and an approximate mile and a half distance, the two monsters thundered around in a circle—the Argyll stronger in gun protection and efficiency, but weaker in side armour and totally vulnerable in her ends, which were already battered out of all semblance to bow and stern. It was a death duel for one, perhaps for both. Around they charged, sputtering and roaring with quick-fire and heavy turret guns. Little by little, as gun positions behind light armour were shot away, the port battery of eight-inch guns on board the enemy yielded to the marksmanship of the Argyll's gunners, until there was nothing to be seen or heard from her but the belching and roaring of the two heavy after barbette guns and the spitting shatter of her quick-

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fire secondary battery. Then came a moment when a quiver went through the Argyll; and when it had passed there was a stillness and silence that had not been there—easily missed over the voice of her batteries. Those in the conning-tower looked aft through the slits and saw yellow smoke oozing from midship ventilators, then a man, naked to the waist, staggering out of a chasm that had once been a companionway. He reeled a little, found his footing and sped forward, bursting into the tower just as the captain had anticipated his message by a trial of the engine-room tubes and telephones.

“Engines both gone to h—l,” he gasped. “Half the crowd are dead, the rest dying—and I’m alive, but I don’t know why.” He was the chief engineer.

“But we’ve got her whipped!” sang out the navigating officer joyously from a peephole; “the after guns are done for.”

They crowded to look; the two huge rifles, plainly discernible at the distance, were farther apart, no longer parallel, and her quick-fire guns were silent also; but there was no sign of flags coming down—the toothless monster still rode along, silent and sullen. Then they noticed that she was turning toward them.

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"Going to work his starboard broadside," said Mr. Ryerson in a deprecating tone. "No good; might as well give up."

"He is not," responded the captain, pale-faced through it all. "He can ram—he is a fool if he does not. We can not avoid him, and we can not penetrate his armour. See—he is steadying himself for us. All hands on deck, Mr. Felton. Give each a chance to swim. The ship is doomed."

"Why—how——" yelled Mr. Ryerson excitedly. "What about the torpedo boat? Can't we get her over? The Whitehead's all ready."

"Get steam up in no time," added the engineer. "Let's get her over, Capt'n. No need for volunteers. I'm out o' commission—Felton to steer—you can spare him now. Ryerson to shoot the torpedo."

"Let me go, Capt'n," said Mr. Felton anxiously. "I can see to steer, and I was once in charge—I am familiar with her."

"It is sure death for you all."

"It is death for all hands otherwise."

"Boilers are intact," said the engineer. "Plenty o' steam for the crane. Give us two men to ride down in her and unhook. We'll do the rest."



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“Go,” said the captain gravely, “and may God watch you. Have you called down for all hands, Mr. Felton? No? Don’t then. There will be gun-fire again, and men may be killed. I will call them, if necessary. Hurry, gentlemen, and God help you! Quartermasters,” he added to the man at the wheel and the signalman listening from the staircase above, “go with them and help launch the boat; but you are not to go. Come back.”

“Very good, sir,” they answered, and away went the five—out on the superstructure and up to the “strongbacks,” where, snug and serene in her chocks, lay the Fool Killer, unharmed—as though the mystic symbolism of her name might have protected her. The engineer started her fires and climbed to the platform of the steam crane; the others rigged the steel-wire bridle and hooked on the heavy block of the crane tackle; then the two quartermasters entered the boat to unhook in the water and hold her to the ship’s side until the others could man her. The engineer opened valves and turned levers; the boat rose from her bed, swung over the side and descended, while the two lieutenants followed down the shattered superstructure to join her; and before she struck the water her

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tubes were hissing with steam and the small-arm fire of the oncoming battleship was resumed.

It was a terrible fire at the closer range, and it was aimed low; for the work on hand could easily be seen by the gunners. But, though they aimed low enough to clear the engineer—vociferating from the crane platform to clear away the after bridlehooks first, as the Argyll was still moving at a twelve-knot rate—they did not aim low enough to hit the boat. They hit the ship and laid the two lieutenants on their backs, unconscious from the impact of flying steel fragments; they hit the two quartermasters and killed them—both tumbling overboard; they hit the lower block of the steam-crane tackle, and the boat finished her descent by a drop of four feet; then, as she plunged and pitched, they aimed lower and hit the small conning-tower, shattering the steering-wheel within, and knocked off the hatch cover which closed the deck entrance to the turtleback forward. And out of this hatch, as the little craft drifted astern, emerged a frowsy head followed by a limp figure of uncertain poise and motion. In the half-closed eyes and in the puffed and wrinkled face were the wonder and fright and bewilderment of a suddenly awakened sleeper. It was Finnegan.

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He stood up, turned around, and fell to his hands and knees.

“Finnegan,” roared the chief, climbing down from the crane; “Finnegan! Give her steam and bring her up to the side. Turn the valve at the left of the engine—draw the lever half way—slow motion.” Then he joined the captain and navigating officer on the bridge—safe from harm now, as the other ship was firing solely at the torpedo boat. The Argyll had ceased firing and the deck was filling with men, smoke-begrimed, bloody and unclothed; for with the loss of the torpedo boat the captain had sent the order through the ship: “All hands on deck—each man for himself—stand by for ramming.”

It is doubtful that Finnegan in his muddled frame of mind understood the order of the engineer, for when it was given the Argyll's guns were still speaking. Yet, somehow, out of his inner consciousness he knew what to do. They watched him crawl aft to the engine and stoop down; then the little craft shot ahead with a suddenness which threw him backward. He had given her full speed, and she was headed straight for the Argyll's stern. Men shouted at him, and he arose, scrambled forward and peered curiously at the wreck of the

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wheel and conning-tower. Again his inner self must have guided him. With a startled glance ahead at the big steel ship he was ramming, he reached down and seized the slackened starboard tiller-rope where it lay along the rail, and pulled on it, drawing the tiller hard over. The boat answered, and nearly hurled him overboard as she heeled and circled under the Argyll's stern, barely clearing by a foot. The rudder straightened as he dropped the tiller-rope, and the torpedo boat Fool Killer, at a thirty-knot speed, rushed away to port, straight for the approaching enemy, in the face of a fusillade that churned the sea into foam. And then only did Finnegan seem to realize that he was under fire. He scrambled aft, hurriedly and unsteadily, and launched headlong into the cockpit, which screened him from sight.

"What a death for any man!" said the captain explosively. "Who of us would not choose it? And it is given to Finnegan. Living or dead, he will be a hero before the world if a man of us lives to speak of this."

"No fear of it, sir," answered the navigating officer. "We will all go down in the suction—too far down to come back—unless—shall I order the men to jump on the chance of swimming clear?"

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"Not yet; they might exhaust themselves. Wait until she is almost on us. I shall go down with my ship."

"I shall swim if I can," said the engineer grimly, as he shed his trousers. "I'd rather be a live prisoner than a dead engineer."

Mr. Clarkson and other officers had joined them; the men on deck were stripped; some held tightly to cork fenders and life-buoys, some to disconnected doors, planks, gratings, and ladders, brought from below; but most of them had secured hammocks and removed the mattresses. All watched intently the little craft speeding away from them between two high waves, and the oncoming monster, rushing to meet her behind two mightier waves, and greeting her with a rain of small shot—sixty a minute from each gun—which bored her through and through, but seemed as yet to strike no vital part.

On went the Fool Killer, and on came the Fool, on parallel tracks that would leave them but a hundred yards' distance in passing, until, when each bore four points off the port bow of the other, a vital part was struck. The watching crew of the Argyll observed the torpedo tube, which had been pointed dead ahead on the boat's stern, slued almost

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squarely around to port on its spindle by the blow of a projectile; but only the trained apprehension of Mr. Ryerson, who, revived, but cut and bleeding, had crawled to the bridge, took cognizance of a little puff of white smoke arising from the stricken breech, and a long, black spindle leaping from its throat.

“The Whitehead’s overboard,” he exclaimed excitedly as he hung to the bridge rail. “Didn’t you see it? Didn’t you? I did. I’ll swear to it. They’ve aimed it themselves, and exploded the breech charge. It may hit her. It may—it’s just about the right angle. Where’s the glass? Watch for the bubbles.”

Nothing could be seen of bubbles at that distance; but it needed no glass to see the great ship lift amidships a few seconds later, and to see the dense masses of thick, yellow smoke and white steam bursting from ports, ventilators, and the riven hull. Then, while she settled low on her port side, they heard a thunderous boom and a rushing of steam which told of exploded magazines and punctured boilers. Her gun-fire ceased, men dotted her decks, and she came on with lessening speed and a perceptibly lower bow wave, until, at a quarter-mile distance, she buried her bow, lifted her

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stern, and dived to the depths, with the air each side of her filled with men leaping from her rising stern. In the chaos of whirlpools, bursting bubbles, heaving waves and wreckage which took her place, could be seen a very few of these men swimming toward the Argyll. But they did not swim long.

"It is horrible!" groaned the captain. "We can not save them. We haven't a boat left."

He was trembling from the reaction of feeling, and leaned heavily against the bridge rail.

"Some may reach us," said Mr. Clarkson, equally unnerved. "We can pull them aboard. And yet—it was the fate meant for us."

"Finnegan's luck," said the engineer. "I'll bet he isn't harmed. It wouldn't be consistent. Where's the glass?"

"I hope so," answered the captain. Then turning to a white-faced and bleeding wreck crawling up the stairs he said: "I congratulate you, Mr. Felton. We thought you were killed."

"I thought so, too, sir," answered the officer. "And I remember at the time thinking that it was a judgment."

"On account of Finnegan?" asked the captain, smiling weakly. "Mr. Felton, there is an in-

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scrutable fate behind all Finnegan's actions. Alone and unaided he has done what the whole ship's company could not do. He has destroyed our enemy."

"Is he alive?"

"Yes, by Jupiter—he is," roared back the engineer joyously, with the glass at his eyes. "He's coming back! He's coming back! He's at the tiller! Told you so. Finnegan's luck!"

They could see plainly with the naked eye the little craft turning around in the distance. And soon they made out the head of Finnegan rising over the edge of the turtleback.

"But she's sinking," said the first lieutenant, who had seized the glass from the engineer. Then, after another look, he continued: "She's low down—she may run under yet."

He stepped down and ordered ropes' ends, life-buoys, and ladders prepared for the rescue of Finnegan; and the men responded with cheers. On came the Fool Killer, nearer and nearer, and slower as she came, Finnegan at the tiller in the cockpit, the lapping water occasionally lifting over the midship rail, the engines barely moving, until at fifty feet distance from the ship she gently settled under and left Finnegan swimming. Twenty men sprang



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over with yells of encouragement. More would have gone, but Mr. Clarkson stopped them. The hero was seized, pushed and lifted toward the ship. They punched him playfully and swore at him lovingly; and Finnegan, who had been swimming well until they reached him, was nearly drowned by his enthusiastic rescuers. He swore back at them, and when they slipped a bowline under his shoulders and men on deck hoisted him up, he protested against such unseamanly treatment. They sat him down on deck and he remained there, looking about him in pained indignation and bewilderment, swaying back and forth in a pool of water.

“Finnegan!” yelled Mr. Clarkson over the noise of cheers and shouts; “Finnegan, do you know what you’ve done? Do you know you’re a hero?”

“Whash matter, sir?” he answered thickly as he brushed his dripping hair from his eyes. “Whasha throw me overboard for, sir? Who hit me?” (He felt of his ribs where the bowline had pinched.) “Whash all ’bout, anyway? Might’s well kill a man ’t onsh as scare him to death.”



## THE DEVIL AND HIS DUE

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“THANK you for coming,” I said, as I rose from the rustic chair under the tree; “but I see there are two of you.”

“But it is so improper, Mr. Somers,” she answered demurely. “Archie would come; he does not approve of his sister meeting gentlemen.”

“Archibald,” I said sternly—I could not call him Archie, nor could I call his Satanic Majesty Satie—“I find that I am out of cigars. Will you kindly take this dollar up to the office and get some? You know my brand.”

“Cert,” he responded, gleefully. He had been grinning at me, leaning over the back of the chair I had vacated, and now took the coin and vanished.

“Why did you give him all that money?” she asked. “You know how careless and forgetful he is. You might not see it again.”

“Careless and forgetful!” I said, in assumed

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amazement. "Yes, Miss Bronson, I know; but I would give much more not to see *him* again."

He was a fat boy; more, he was a whistling boy. The combination is well known, and need not be enlarged upon. Some at the hotel averred that he had no mind—no soul. Others declared that an imp of darkness filled the place of a soul; and in this I agreed. But, as he did not need a soul, and as an able imp knows something—knows when it is not wanted—I had concluded that his soul was a weakling imp, an imbecile devil cast out of the lower regions because unfitted to remain.

"Please be seated," I said, taking her hand and leading her to the chair. "You must know why I wanted to see you alone. I'm going away in a few days. I don't know when I'll see you again—as things are."

Perhaps I had startled her. Her face was white in the half light, and she nervously withdrew her hand from mine and grasped the arm of the chair.

"You must know, Annie," I went on, while she slowly sank into the seat, "that under all our fun and nonsense this summer I've been loving you more and more every day——"

"Oh!" she exclaimed in a suppressed tone that

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sounded reproachful, if not angry, while she gripped both arms of the chair rigidly.

"You're not offended, Annie, are you?" I asked, leaning over her.

Her answer was a hysterical little scream. She bounded to her feet, sprang past my outstretched arms, and with a gasping "No; don't touch me," sped into the shadows in the direction of the hotel. I followed in stupefied amazement, unable to comprehend, but stopped when I heard snickering laughter in the devil's voice. This gave way to plaintive howls punctuated by smacks of an open hand, and I knew he was getting his ears boxed.

"For deserting her at a ticklish moment," I muttered, with bitterness in my soul. "She's a coquette, after all. Who'd have thought it? Well, here ends my worst love-affair."

I lit my pipe—cigars would not do—and puffing savagely, struck off through the grounds to the river road which led down to the sea; and there, with the roar of the surf in my ears, I spent the warm night in the frame of mind which comes to the jilted—knowing what Satan felt after the Hecyra. At daylight, as I turned into the road on the way back, I noticed a medium-sized schooner-yacht in the river, with canvas furled and anchored

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over the shallows. There was no private signal flying at this hour, but I knew her—Hooper's Sunlight, back from a Gulf cruise. Fervently envying Hooper, I passed on.

Miss Bronson—not Annie now, just plain Miss Bronson, a young lady I knew—was not down early to breakfast, but I came upon her suddenly in the passage on my way out of the dining-room. Her face became red as the ribbon at her throat, and her tremulous "Good-morning" was barely audible.

"Quite right," I thought, as I repeated the greeting in my iciest tones and strode on. "It is quite right, and proper, that she is embarrassed and ashamed of herself. My conscience is clear."

Helped by my clear conscience, and sleepy after my sleepless night, I dozed through the morning, waking in time for a late luncheon with less pain in my heart and head, but with more of the iron in my soul; and after the meal, while I talked with Hooper on the veranda, Miss Bronson came out with her brother. She wore the combination of white and red that I had liked so well and praised so often, and in her hair were flowers that I had given her the day before; she was pale, and the corners of her mouth twitched, while her blue

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eyes held a pathetic entreaty that would have brought me to her side asking, "Why?" had nothing happened; as it was, it hardened me the more.

"She naturally wears what becomes her," I mused gloomily; "that's her business in life; and I've seen that look on her face when she has lost at golf." Then, fancying that I had seen the same look in the eyes of a cat that had lost a mouse, I turned my back to her.

Her brother was approaching me; I knew that by the sound of his abominable whistle. And I knew by the cadence that there was something on his mind. He stepped between Hooper and myself—such was his habit—and faced me.

"Here's your cigar, Tom," he said. (Once in a burst of confidence she had called me this name in his hearing; he had henceforth adopted it.) "And here's the change." He handed me the cigar—fresh from the box, as I could tell by the touch—and seventy-five cents in money. Then, with an expression of impeccable virtue on his fat face, and his lips pursed for whistling, he turned away.

"Archibald," I said solemnly, "you spent the dollar last evening and have become honest under assistance and compulsion."

"Well, whatcha kickin' about?" he answered

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in the querulous tone of the aggrieved. "Got your money, didn'tcha? Got your cigar, didn'tcha?"

"Archibald," I continued, "I forgive you. Allow me to make over to you this perfecto. It is a good cigar—easy to begin on—it will not make you sick. And this money, also; take it as a present. I shall undoubtedly kill you some day; for you will not reform. But—we will start afresh. You have done me a service."

She heard it all. The boy pocketed the gifts, marched down the veranda with the high step of a rooster on a wet day, drew his doubled fist over his shoulder as though to hit his sister as he passed her, and disappeared through the office door. Just within was a candy counter, and here his whistle stopped.

It is unwholesome to strike—no matter how deservedly—a creature you are fond of. There is a never-failing rebound which smites you the hardest. I watched furtively while she stared fixedly at some golfers in the distance, and saw the red spots grow in her cheeks and the tears come to her eyes. Then she turned and went slowly down the veranda after her brother, and, could I have framed an apology, or unsaid my words, I would have followed; for, as surely as I knew her, I knew



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that she had audited the young man's accounts; and as it was not a question of love or pique, but of common honesty, I felt keenly my position. But there was menace in those red cheeks which no mere words might soften; and, besides, Hooper was talking.

He was a big, jovial, sailor-like man of about fifty, with a wife as jolly as himself—and as small as he was big—whom he loved even more than he did his yacht. He had not noticed Miss Bronson; no man could do that and go on talking of yachts and yachting, tide-rips and a foul hawse, a lubberly crew that lost an anchor, and a tiresome lot of guests who became seasick and asked wearying questions.

“And they've all gone this morning,” he said; “and the skipper has fired all but three of the men. They're up here after the new anchor, and we'll go down in the gig with the new men he's shipped. Want to get them into uniform soon as possible. Others can float the anchor down on a scow, and take your trunk too. I want a congenial crowd, for once. I'll get Gamble, if he'll come, and over at Newport we'll find more of the boys. Then we'll take in the cup races. What do you say?”

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I had still a week to spare, and accepted his invitation. While I had doubts about Gamble and myself being congenial company, I did not advance the objection, as I knew that Hooper liked him, and I was anxious for any company that would relieve me of my own. Gamble and I had not quarrelled; we had merely competed for the favour of the first young lady at the hotel—a practical-minded miss with good looks, and a plaintiveness of speech and expression that brought men to her feet—in which contest I had won; and though I had hoped that Miss Runyon regarded the affair no more seriously than it had appeared to me, there was silent reproach in the tilt of her nose—troubling to my conscience—when I later transferred my homage to Miss Bronson, a star of the first magnitude, while Gamble hated me intensely from the first. Afterward he again became my rival until Miss Bronson kindly suppressed him; but for a time, deadly in earnest, and only sorry for Miss Runyon, I returned his sentiments cordially. It was all over now; and I hoped that Hooper could get us both away before he learned my fate.

So, while Hooper attended to his anchor, I donned my yachting suit, packed my trunk, di-

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rected that it be placed aboard the scow at the landing, and then settled my bill, conscious, as I talked with the clerk, that Miss Bronson and her invalid mother passed behind me. I turned on the spur of the moment and lifted my cap, willing, in this, our last meeting, to make amends and part on good terms if possible; but my silent greeting was either not seen or ignored, and with a sharper edge to my humiliation, I left the hotel, revisited the scenes hallowed by walks and talks with her, pitied myself immensely, and reached the landing at two thirty, the time set by Hooper, in as maudlin a condition as it is possible for a healthy young man to be in.

Hooper was on the dock, yelling to hurry. I quickened my steps, noticing that, though the scow at the dock held five trunks and a group of uniformed men, there was no anchor.

“Anchor hasn’t come yet,” said Hooper, “but we’ll go down now. No one aboard but the cook and steward; climb in.”

As I followed him down the incline to the gig, I heard a familiar whistling. There, in the bow, was Archibald; at the oars were four as villainous-looking dock rats as ever robbed a tipsy sailor; in the stern-sheets was Mrs. Hooper, smiling as ever,

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and, beside her, Miss Runyon, Miss Bronson, and Gamble—the latter looking uncomfortably moist and embarrassed, as though he also had hurried. The mills of the gods had caught us both.

There was no retreat possible now, and, bound not to look like Gamble, and heartened by the sight of the two young ladies—armed neutrals, as I knew—laughing and chatting together, I swallowed the lump in my throat, saluted them smilingly, and sat down, facing Gamble—grateful that Mrs. Hooper was a voluble talker.

“Yes,” she began, after the conventional preliminaries, “Hooper thought he’d bring a lot of men aboard—stag party, he called it—but I thought different. I want some women, and I’m bound to have them. If he gets more men at Newport, I’ll find more women. I can chaperone a whole seminary, and—by the way, Mr. Somers, did you know that Miss Bronson is my niece? No? Strange she never told you. She told me all about you.”

Miss Bronson flushed at this and Miss Runyon fidgeted visibly. “And Nellie, here,” she continued, “I’ve known since she was a baby—knew her mother at school thirty years ago—oh, I’m not

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ashamed of my age—and I received the nicest kind of a letter at New Orleans from——”

“Mrs. Hooper,” interrupted Miss Runyon.

“Shove off!” commanded Hooper, who had taken the yoke ropes; and then, as the dock rats awkwardly pushed the boat clear of the dock, “You men want boat drill first thing—you’ll get it, too.”

The men scowled, shipped their oars, and began to pull, each in his turn. It was plain they were not sailors. Gamble and I pretended to be interested in Hooper’s harsh comments on their work, and though the young ladies were certainly annoyed, the innocent Mrs. Hooper went on.

“You needn’t protest, Nellie,” she said, with a motherly smile; “you did write. That is why I asked you aboard when Hooper said he was coming. Oh, I’ve been young myself.”

“I assure you,” I said in a generous effort to relieve the pressure, “that I am exceedingly complimented if Miss Runyon spoke of me.”

“I did not speak of you,” snapped Miss Runyon.

“Not you, Mr. Somers,” said Mrs. Hooper, beaming my way. “Some one else.”

“Oh—I beg pardon, Miss Runyon.”

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Then I felt the hot tingling creep up my cheeks to the hair roots, and saw Gamble's mouth open in sheer amazement.

"Pull together," growled Hooper, busy with his steering.

"And I didn't know he was coming," complained Miss Nellie, "or I wouldn't have come." She put her handkerchief to her eyes, and Mrs. Hooper understood. She gathered the girl in her arms and kissed her. Gamble and I looked into each other's eyes. In his I plainly read, "She means you," and I know that mine returned the accusation. I had learned something; but Gamble was not yet in a reasoning condition.

"I want to go back," moaned the weeping girl. "I don't want to go."

"There, there, dear, never mind," said the misguided woman. "It'll be all right. I know about these things; we'll be the jolliest party that ever went yachting."

If Hooper would have only interrupted at the right moment it might not have gone further; he looked as though about to speak, but the boy in the bow got ahead of him.

"Oh, come off," he said, in his disagreeable falsetto; "they're back numbers, Mrs. Hooper

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—both got it in the neck. Nell's dead sore on Gamble and don't speak to Tom in public, and Sis swears if I mention Tom's name again she'll choke me, and she soured on Gamble——”

“ Archie! ” exclaimed Miss Bronson in agonized tones; and then, with face aflame, addressing me, she said, “ I never prohibited your name, Mr. Somers, or uttered that threat.”

“ Oh, well, you meant it,” said the boy, “ ’cause he gimme your boodle.”

“ Miss Bronson,” I said, with the calmness of desperation, “ if you will permit me I will kill him now. You know I have doomed him. It is inevitable, and I am willing to hang. I can hold his head under the surface, and he will suffer no pain. Drowning is an easy death.”

“ I beg you will not joke, Mr. Somers. It is not the time for it. Perhaps Mr. Hooper will turn back and land us.”

“ Not now, Miss Bronson,” he answered; “ not until I see how the yacht is. Only two men aboard.”

“ I'll murder him if Somers don't,” growled Gamble to himself; but it was heard.

“ Now, now,” said Mrs. Hooper, “ not another word from any one, until we get aboard and

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I can straighten this out. Keep silent, everybody."

We obeyed her. Miss Runyon dried her eyes and sat up. Miss Bronson sat straighter, and looked at the distance. Mrs. Hooper scanned our faces with motherly concern; Hooper growled at the men; the idiot in the bow whistled cheerfully; and Gamble and I exchanged furtive glances until our right hands involuntarily extended and met; then we gripped tightly, in the fulness of fraternity and fellow-feeling; and before them all, silently and with grave faces, each looking over the other's shoulder, we shook hands, up and down, to the accompaniment of that detestable whistle.

And so we went down the river. Archibald essayed to amuse us with comments on the situation until sternly ordered by Hooper to "dry up, or go overboard." Then he subsided. Hooper was palpably as angry at his wife as was possible in him, but he vented it on the greenhorns at the oars, becoming almost profane in his criticism. And they replied in kind; it was a warm afternoon, and they made hard work of the pulling. I was undoubtedly the happiest person in the boat; for I had drawn secret comfort from Miss Bronson's hot denial of her brother's charge. But my happiness



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was dashed at the side-ladder, when, instead of taking my politely extended right hand as an aid in stepping out of the boat, she calmly and coldly ignored it, taking instead her hand-bag—which I had lifted as I rose—out of my left hand, and ascending the ladder alone. Gamble was wiser, and Miss Nellie's disdainful face warned me not to repeat the courtesy.

Followed by Gamble, I took my diminished self to the forward cabin—devoted to men—while Mrs. Hooper mustered her charges into the sacred after cabin—where no man may enter—and Hooper drove his recruits to the fore-castle, to deal out their uniforms, and, I fancy, to ease his mind, for we heard strong language filtering through the intervening galley. Archibald had begun a tour of inspection on deck, his surprised comments and questions to himself as he came upon the different deck fittings coming to our ears through the skylight. These sounds, drifting forward, ended in a yelp and whinny of pain, and Gamble and I, who had spoken not a word, smiled approvingly and helped ourselves anew to the refreshments which Hooper's well-trained steward had provided. Then Hooper's heavy step sounded above, and he came down the companion.

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"Steward, give me a high-ball—quick," he called. "Great smoke, boys, what a job! But I've a skipper who'll make sailors of them. Say," he said to us as he sat down, "something's up with this crowd. Don't know what, and it don't matter. Mrs. Hooper's made a mess of things for once, evidently. Wouldn't have that cub aboard for any money. Caught him unlocking the windlass. Asked me if it made the boat go. Told him yes. Now, I'm d——d sorry for this mix, boys, but lay low, and I'll take 'em ashore when the men come down. Wouldn't take a boat up to any dock with this gang I've shipped."

"No, no, Hooper," I said. "Mrs. Hooper invited them, and of course they didn't expect to see us. The boy described us correctly—back numbers. Let them stay aboard and enjoy the trip. Gamble and I will escape."

"Boys, I can't do that," he answered in some embarrassment; but Gamble joined me, and we argued him down.

"Well, we'll wait for developments in the after cabin," he finally said. "Perhaps Mrs. Hooper can straighten this out, but I wouldn't attempt it. Meanwhile, suppose we get into the gig with our new men and go over to the beach for a swim

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until the others come down; then we'll know who goes ashore."

We gladly agreed. There were no bathing suits in the yacht, but Hooper averred that we would not need them. "There's a famous beach across the bay," he said, "and not a soul lives within sight of it."

Archibald would have accompanied us, even in the face of my warm invitation—delivered from the stern-sheets of the boat as he stood at the rail—to "come along and be drowned," and the ostentatious display of a hangman's noose which Gamble tied in the end of the yoke rope. But Hooper, the last to enter the boat, shook his finger impressively in Archibald's face, and admonished him to take good care of the yacht and the ladies; he was to be captain until Captain Moore returned in the scow; if pirates attacked the yacht he was to fight them off, and if any escaped he was to pursue them; if the cook and steward mutinied he was to hang them at the end of the main boom. All of which Archibald listened to, open-eyed and open-mouthed.

Before we shoved off, Mrs. Hooper appeared above us and eyed Gamble and myself severely.

"What have you two been doing to my girls?" she asked. "They won't talk about you—to me.

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They're down there with their arms about each other, and all I can get out of them is that they want to go ashore. If either of you have been talking about one to the other, it'll all come out now. They're comparing notes."

I was guiltless of this crime and Gamble declared his innocence—in thought and word; then, with Hooper grinning and the four new men muttering, we got away.

"Please assure them, Mrs. Hooper," I called back with all the dignity I had left, "that they need not go ashore on our account—that Mr. Gamble and myself intend to relieve them of our presence soon as is possible."

It was a long, hard pull for those undisciplined dock rats, sweltering in their blue uniforms under the hot, afternoon sun; and before we had left the river they were frankly mutinous. Then came a mile of choppy water—a deep but narrow bay to the right of the river, on the opposite side of which was the sandy beach; and in this choppy water the men caught crabs, splashed us, and, in general, so exasperated Hooper that he declared his intention of paying them off that evening. Which was certainly unwise; for no sooner were we undressed and out to a good swimming depth than they

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bundled our clothing, to the last wilted collar, into the boat, launched it with snarls and curses, and with two pulling and two standing erect, threatening our heads with the oars, passed by us heading back to the river. Hooper had caught the gunwale, but a pistol shoved into his face caused him to let go. Then all four bent to the oars, and we swam in.

“Come along,” gasped Hooper, purple with rage, “around the beach—the women—cook and steward are no good—those devils have guns.”

We started for the yacht—around that four-mile horseshoe of alternate sand and pebbles—though I wondered as I ran what we would do when we got there. There were a passenger steamer and a large steam yacht about a mile out, and occasional openings in the trees inland showed up farm-houses and summer hotels. If any binoculars were turned our way, their holders must have been surprised if not scandalized at seeing three naked men in such an unseemly hurry. And how would Mrs. Hooper and the girls regard us—even in the rôle of rescuers?

Hooper was an athlete, and in spite of his age and size, easily distanced us. He stopped once, pointed at the boat disappearing behind the point,

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and then at a blackening of the sky inland, from which forked lightning was shooting, sang out hoarsely to "hurry up," and sped on. We understood; the yacht was riding to a small anchor, and was in danger from the elements, if not from the thieves. Gamble and myself were evenly matched, and panted and puffed in company, and in spite of our sore feet—bruised and cut by the stones—broke all our previous records; but before we had reached the neck of woods bordering the river road Hooper was long out of sight, and the squall had come—pelting us with warm, horizontal rain. "Good!" grunted Gamble; "it'll keep the women below decks." Though fully as modest as he, I but partly concurred. The wind was down the river, and if the anchor dragged it would drag downhill.

We crossed the river road at an angle, luckily meeting no one, struck into the bushes, and reached the bank abreast of where the yacht should be—but was not. She was below us, drifting broadside to, and we had arrived just in time to see, through the thick smudge of rain, Hooper clambering up the bobstays. There was no one on deck, and sick with fear of what might have happened, I yelled "Come on," and we raced down the bank. As we caught up to the yacht we noticed empty hawse-pipes, and

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knew that the chain had either parted at the windlass, or had been slipped. Then, a glance seaward showed us the gig with the four men pulling hard to reach the shore at the left of the river mouth, but unavailingly in the fierce wind. They were blowing to sea. A quarter mile below the yacht we dived in, swam frantically, and barely caught the bobstays as she came down. Resting a moment—for we were exhausted—we climbed up, paused at the rail until sure of an empty deck, tumbled inboard, and shot down the forecastle hatch, where we found Hooper and the boy. Hooper was still purple-faced, and the boy's fat countenance showed signs of recent mental agitation.

“What's happened?” I gasped, as I sank upon a locker.

“Women are all right,” he answered. “Locked themselves in the after cabin. Forecastle's gutted—skipper's room gutted—steward and cook are robbed—forward cabin's cleaned out—everything portable—every rag, bag, and blanket taken into that gig and being blown to sea and we after them. And this boy—this bright, brave, charming, lovable boy—hid with the women folks, and then slipped the chain to make the boat go after the pirates.” With his hands upon his knees, he glowered at the

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youth and leaned toward him, and Archibald shrunk away. One ear was larger than the other, and very red; but it was not a blush. I think that Hooper had laid violent hands upon him.

“Well, how’d I know your old boat wouldn’t go?” he piped. “You told me I was captain. You told me that thing upstairs made her go. You told me to chase pirates—and they’re pirates, ain’t they? All your own fault.”

“If it wasn’t for your people, I’d throw you overboard,” said Hooper.

“But the cook and steward?” I asked. “What have they been doing?”

“Ashore in the dingey—gone up to a farmhouse after milk and butter. I wouldn’t have permitted it; but Mrs. Hooper’s only a woman—a good-natured, blundering fool woman. Boys, we’ve got to get sail on the yacht and tack back and forth until this blows out.”

“What—as we are?” I asked, aghast at the prospect.

“Just as we are,” he said, firmly, “and quickly, too.” An increase of wind was apparent in the sounds from above; and it gave force to his words.

“Not by a jugful,” I said emphatically. “One of us can strip Archibald.”



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“What’ll he wear, then? We’ll need him, too.”

“Will you keep the ladies locked up?” asked Gamble, as agitated as myself.

“Of course. But say, let’s draw on them—something to cover us—a dress, a skirt, a night-gown—any old thing. I’ll see what they’ve got.”

He went aft by way of the galley to consult through locked doors; and Gamble and myself, six-footers and broad in proportion, mutely scanned each other’s dimensions—busy with the same thought, I know. We were thinking of those slim waists aft, and the slimmer prospect of being covered by anything which fitted them—except, possibly, the last-named garment—which was manifestly too preposterous to be considered.

“We might turn a dress around,” stuttered Gamble, “and put another on over it.”

“Of course,” I answered scornfully; “and put two shirt-waists on—one in front and one behind and sew up the sides. With time enough for that we could make shirts and trousers.”

Gamble subsided helplessly, and soon Hooper appeared.

“Here,” he said as he unloaded an armful.

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"Here are three mackintoshes—no sleeves, just armholes and a cape. Get into 'em, quick."

We tried them on. At each waist line and below they would button across; but above were three white triangles of uncovered masculinity.

"Won't do," I groaned wildly. "Go get something else."

"Turn 'em upside down," cried Hooper excitedly; for the sounds above were ominous. "Stick your legs through, and cut armholes in the bottom. We'll sew them on. Where's there a knife? Archibald, give me your knife."

With the boy's knife he cut and slashed, and again we tried. It was a tight squeeze, but when buttoned up, and laced around our necks with a length of spun-yarn, and bound in the middle by a "soul-and-body lashing" of the same, the garments screened us from all but the harshest criticism; and in this regard they were even better than bathing suits, for the dangling capes reached to our ankles, and the rear elevation was entirely blanketed. Then, when Hooper had impressively cautioned Archibald to keep the knife—the only one aboard—in his pocket—the only pocket aboard—ready for use at any time, we went on deck. Archibald remained below, however, and we heard his

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contented whistle drifting aft through the galley as we ascended. No danger, except the danger of physical pain, could disturb this youth.

The shore was hidden. Darkness was closing down, and nothing but a circular patch of angry water of which the yacht was the centre could now be seen. Sea and sky were merged, and above was a hollow hemisphere of gray, of no great dimensions, from one side of which came a driving pressure of wind and a furious bombardment of rain and spindrift, while in our ears was the humming, roaring, singing sound of the wind in the rigging. The yacht was heeled—starboard side to the blast—and, short as had been the time for it, vicious waves were already pounding her. We were clear of the river, and at sea. Gamble and I were yachtsmen, and knew the ropes. Under Hooper's directions we loosed the staysail, jib, and mainsail, putting a double reef in the latter, and with Archibald holding slack (for Hooper had brazenly entered the ladies' cabin and brought him up by his sorest ear) we hoisted the canvas and trimmed sheets to port. Then Hooper lighted the binnacle, and as he took the wheel, shouted in our ears:

“Wind's a little west of north. We're about five miles east of Watch Hill light. We'll make

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hourly tacks parallel with the shore. Variation's about ten degrees westerly here, and it'll be due west-sou'west on one tack, east-nor'east on the other—allowing for two points leeway, due west and nor'east. Go down and tell the women we're all right, and to fix up some sandwiches."

"No," I yelled; "I'll send Archibald."

But Archibald had already descended, and Gamble also refused to go.

"Go yourself. You're married, Hooper," he vociferated. "Go down yourself."

So Hooper, who had no shame, went down the companionway while I steered, and when he came up, the boy came with him—howling.

"Now, young man," bawled Hooper, with his hand on his collar, "you're to stay on deck here and do as you're told. You're to get wet to the skin, and possibly catch your death, and die; but until you die, you're to stay around where we can get that knife—understand? Keep that knife handy."

"I won't," he screamed. "It's my knife. I'll tell my father."

He wriggled unavailingly while the knife was being twisted from his pocket; and when Hooper had shaken him vigorously and sat him down hard

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on the slanting deck, he wept convulsively, and called us all kinds of bad names. It was really comforting to hear him weep, to such a point had his porcine offensiveness brought me. Hooper placed the knife on the skylight, and coming close to us said: "Port side on the lower sash under the grating; we'll know where it is now, if we want it."

Sandwiches and coffee were passed into the fore-castle and we supped hungrily; then, as we sailed on, we looked for Watch Hill light; but no light as much as a mile away could be seen through that thick smudge, and at the end of an hour we put about, steering back on the magnetic course—northeast. In another hour came a lull, and a partial clearing of the blinding rain, but we saw no lights, and again tacked ship and headed west. But no sooner were sheets trimmed down than from the blackness on the weather quarter came a whistling blast that nearly whipped the masts out, and I at the wheel barely succeeded in bringing the yacht, lee rail buried, and trembling like a frightened animal, up to the wind. Then the companion doors burst open and three figures appeared and clung to the binnacle, the reflection from which illumined me like a vision; and I shivered, but not from cold; it was a warm night.

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“What is it?” cried Mrs. Hooper. “Where’s Hooper?” Hooper just then appeared and glanced at the compass. “Hooper, I *will not* stay down there to drown like a rat. I don’t care what you’ve got on.”

“All right, Mollie—stay up. Take the wheel, if you like. Keep her shaking. We’ve got to reef down. Only a shift of wind and a puff; but I don’t like it. Girls, better go below.”

But they would not; they clung to the binnacle and stared wildly at me; so Hooper passed a few turns of rope about them and went forward to slack the halyards, while Mrs. Hooper—a competent helmswoman—relieved me at the wheel, and Gamble, hiding his face, sneaked out of the darkness, to join me at the main-sheet in that harrowing illumination from the binnacle. When Hooper came aft to help, a rippling duet of laughter sounded over the gale; the lady at the wheel joined in, and we three unfortunates tugged at the sheet, and listened, and suffered. Afterward Mrs. Hooper stoutly maintained that it was simply hysterics, but I never quite believed it, even though Miss Bronson had given voice to a piercing scream when I climbed the sheet and seated myself astride the boom to pass the reef-earring; for I have noticed

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that they will laugh at our direst trouble, and in this case, most certainly, no hysterics were needed.

While on the boom I saw, dimly in the darkness, the fat figure of Archibald hovering over the skylight, but in the excitement forgot his affection for his knife, and did not speak of it. The reefing done and the sail hoisted, Hooper induced the ladies to go down, and I again took the wheel, noticing that the yacht, which had been heading northwest by the compass when we began reefing, now headed about west—her original course—though still close-hauled. Mrs. Hooper had kept her by the wind, as directed.

“Wind’s back again,” said Hooper when I called his attention to it. “It’s a bad sign—means worse weather. We’ll make a two-hour stretch this time. I want to pick up Watch Hill light, and know where I am.”

But the wind—which had now become a furious gale—veered steadily until it again blew from the weather quarter; so we slackened sheets, and sailed faster, while a heaving sea made steering difficult. This sea puzzled Hooper, an expert in such matters. “It’s as though it came in from the broad Atlantic,” he said, “and we’re on a weather coast. Ought to have fairly smooth water.”

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Before I could reply there came a shock, and a crash, and violent vibration of the hull; then the two topmasts fell to leeward—snapping short at the caps and leaving the lower masts standing—and the next sea swept the yacht. We were ashore.

Gamble and the boy were amidships, clinging to the life-rail, but Hooper and myself were thrown to the lee main rigging, where we clutched the bights of ropes and saved ourselves. Before we could regain our footing, however, another sea crashed over the craft from squarely abeam, and I heard a cry of pain from Hooper.

“I’m hurt,” he gasped. “Look out for the women, Somers. Keep ’em below decks—they’ll be washed overboard.”

I scrambled for the companionway, and met another sea which hurled me back to the rail. Before I could recover I saw a slight figure emerge from below.

“Go back!” I shouted. “Don’t come up yet. Go back again.”

The figure swayed unsteadily on the reeling deck, and half turned; then a larger sea boarded the yacht, and I heard her scream. Then, half-buried as I clung to the rail, I saw her



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swept past, high over my head, and heard the scream repeated in the receding hollow to leeward.

Not knowing which of the three it was—only knowing that it resembled Annie Bronson, I followed, and when I raised my head out of that black water, the yacht was an undefined blur in the darkness, fifty feet to windward, and I was alone with the merciless sea.

“Annie!” I called, when I could speak. “Annie, Annie—where are you?”

There was no answer, and the desolation of death gripped my heart. Not until then had I realized that I needed this girl more than life; and not caring to live if she died, I swam blindly in the darkness—away from the yacht.

“Annie!” I called repeatedly. “Answer. Can you hear?”

There was an answer from the right—a choking sound; and I swam that way, in spite of my embarrassing drapery making such headway that I drove her under before knowing that I had reached her; but I lifted her to the surface by the hair, and held her head above water. Her clothing had supported her thus far, and, though almost exhausted, and hardly conscious, she was able to

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speak. But it was not the one I had thought—it was Miss Nellie Runyon.

She struggled weakly, but I quieted her by firmly spoken commands and directions; then, holding her above and in front of me, I swam on my back. We could reach the shore, I assured her, and send help for the others.

But something hard and round struck my left arm, and I seized it. It was the maintopmast, and, as I clung to it and rested, I knew by the rushing by of the seas that it was anchored to the yacht by some of the gear. Cautiously pulling myself, with the girl on my arm now, along to the end, I found the backstay extending taut to windward, and heard Gamble's voice coming down the wind.

"Gamble!" I shouted with all my power of lung. "O-o-o-o-oh, Gamble! I've got her—hanging on to the topmast. Send down a line on a life-buoy."

He answered with a joyous hurrah. How he heard me—a hundred feet to leeward of him in that fierce gale—and how he managed to float the life-buoy directly within reach, I never could understand. But it was done in five minutes, and I placed the cork ring under the arms of the limp Miss Nellie, sang out "Haul in!" and secured a

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firm grip on the becketts. He pulled us to the rail in half a minute, and dropped me the bight of the rope to hold to; he lifted the girl—life-buoy and all—over the rail; then, as I scrambled up in the darkness, I saw him disengage that drenched and helpless young lady, enfold her tightly in his arms, and kiss her repeatedly on the lips, cheeks, and forehead, unmindful of the seas which washed past him. Then he gripped my hand and said brokenly:

“God bless you for this, Somers. I knew you’d get her if any one could; but I knew you couldn’t get back if I went too.”

“Yes, but take her below, man,” I answered. “She was alive when I had her; you’ve drowned her.” He carried her down.

He had almost drowned *me* in that rapid rush through the water, and from this, or from her safety after the danger, or from the kissing—I do not know which—Miss Nellie was unconscious in his arms. And I—I had learned something more, and I climbed the sloping deck with a hazy comprehension of the irony of fate, which had brought me unneeded between this young couple, while leaving Miss Bronson to be rescued, possibly by Gamble, who had nothing to gain; by Hooper, a practical old married man; or, perhaps, by her brother, who

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could only do it with the help of Providence, and who would hold the feat over her head, as a club, while she lived.

The yacht had been lifted to shallower water, and the seas now spent most of their force against the higher side before washing over the deck. I found Hooper lashed to the fife-rail, weakly replying to the comments of the uninjured and unsubdued boy, who was proudly holding to a belaying-pin with one hand and defying the sea to break his grip.

“Good for you, Somers,” groaned Hooper. “Other two had sense enough to stay down. I’m helpless—ribs stove in. She’ll hold together, no doubt, until daylight, and we’ll be taken off.”

“But how did it happen, Hooper? Where are we? What land runs north and south around here?”

“I don’t know—I don’t know. I can’t make it out. We ought to have been off Watch Hill Pond, but not down to the reef. It can’t be Block Island, or Fisher’s Island—impossible. I know the yacht’s drift under any rag she carries. It must be the reef; but we’re on soft bottom. I can’t understand.”

I went aft and looked in the binnacle. We

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were heading northeast, and, as the yacht was presumably lying parallel with the nearest land, this was consistent only with our having overrun the distance and bringing up on Watch Hill Reef without seeing the light. But the seas were now boarding the yacht on the weather bow—for she had swung around until her stern grounded—and these seas came over us with the force and volume of Atlantic combers, too heavy to develop in the short distance from the Rhode Island shore. As it was manifestly impossible for us to have missed Watch Hill Reef and reached Fisher's Island—far to the westward—it seemed that we must have drifted south and east, and struck Block Island on our last westerly tack. But this meant a fifteen-mile drift before making sail, and I could not admit it.

Gamble appeared and announced that Miss Runyon was doing well. "Feeble, but rather happy," he said, grinning weakly in the light of the binnacle. "And say, Somers, she's almighty grateful to you, and wants to be forgiven—wants me to speak for her."

"For what?" I asked in surprise.

"Oh, for flirting with you and throwing you over. You see, her conscience is mighty active just

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now, and she thinks you may have felt badly. She tells me it was to stir me up."

"Oh, the vanity of womenkind!" I exclaimed sourly; "and you, Gamble, was that your object in crossing my hawse, afterward?"

"Well, not exactly, Somers. I was sore, and off my feed, of course; and Miss Bronson was very attractive, and very kind to me. But I had no chance in that quarter."

"I forgive you both," I said, severely as I could. "Let it be a lesson to you. Tell her I forgive her 'way down in my heart."

Then he announced a vital piece of news—the water was coming into the cabin. I told Hooper.

"Keep 'em below as long as possible," he answered. "It's better than perching in the rigging, and the lower masts might go at any time. Lower the mainsail and jibs; they're straining the spars; and get the cartridges for the gun, and the rockets from the skipper's room. Use 'em up."

We obeyed him; and for an hour, as the forward deck sank from the disintegration of the hull beneath, the signal gun barked and rockets soared skyward; but there was no answering signal, and when the last rocket and cartridge were expended the foremast went by the board; then

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the ladies came up, flooded out of the cabin, and we assisted them and Hooper into the main rigging, for every sea now swept the deck.

"Unlay some strands from the gear and lash us, boys," said Hooper. "One turn's enough; we might want to cast off in a hurry. You, boy, go down and get the knife from the skylight," he called to Archibald.

"Knife ain't there," answered the youth.

"Where is it?"

"Don't know. 'Tain't there. I looked, and 'tain't there."

"When did you look?" I asked, suspiciously.

"Just now—'fore we came up."

I descended, searched the skylight, and found that he had spoken truly. It was gone. Then I remembered seeing him at the skylight when reefing; and knowing him well, climbed up to him.

"You took that knife yourself," I said sternly. "Where is it?"

"I didn't," he exclaimed petulantly; "and it's my knife, anyway. What right have you got to my knife, I'd like to know."

"He put something into the binnacle when I was steering," said Mrs. Hooper. "Was it the knife, Archie?"

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"No, it wasn't the knife at all. I didn't put anything into the binnacle."

"The binnacle!" groaned Hooper. "Great smoke! Boy, if you've wrecked my yacht— Go down and see, Somers."

I descended again. In the after-part of the brass globe, close to the compass, was the knife. As I removed it the compass card swung half-way round, then back, and when it had steadied a little the lubber's point hovered at due east.

"Hooper," I said, as I joined them, "he put it in the binnacle, and hauled us four points north of our course. We've simply piled up on the Rhode Island shore, and this wind and sea are just as you thought—right in from the broad Atlantic."

He answered only with wheezing groans as he climbed painfully toward the boy. There was terrible menace in the slow deliberation of his movements. I believe he would have killed him, crippled as he was. And I prevented it—not for his sake, I am free to admit; for Hooper's, and for the sake of that quiet sister who crouched by his side, who had spoken no word to me, whose disapproval overtopped the terror of the night. I seized the



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boy by the collar, wrenched him clear of the rigging, and dropped him to the sheer-pole.

“Stay down there as you value your life!” I shouted. “Hooper, think twice. He isn’t worth it.”

Hooper seemed to be choking, but he remained where he was, and the boy had brain enough to obey me. Fear of pain always aroused his faculties.

“Oh, my yacht!” gasped Hooper at last. “My beautiful yacht! Swapped for a jack-knife!” But he made no further demonstration toward Archibald.

Gamble and I secured cork jackets for all and arranged them; then we unlaid strands from running gear, tied ourselves to the shrouds, and in silence and cold—for the gale blew chilly now—we passed the night in the rigging. Just before daylight the weather cleared, and we saw lights to leeward, moving back and forth, as though carried by men; then in the gray of the morning we saw a high shore a quarter mile away and a furious nest of breakers in which no mere surf-boat could live and no life-boat be launched. And the Watch Hill life-savers, who had seen our signals, were well aware of it; for coming down the beach

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from the westward was a four-horse truck carrying, not a boat, but a life-car and wrecking gear. Men waved their hats, and we, having none, answered with our hands.

They arranged their apparatus; a puff of smoke arose from the beach, and with the report of the wreck-gun came a conical shot, with a line attached, singing over our heads. It fell into the sea, and the bight of the line stretched across the deck.

“Get it,” said Hooper. “Haul in plenty of slack from to windward, cut it, and reeve it through the throat halyard block aloft to haul on. They’ll send out a whip and a hawser.”

We followed his instructions, unreeving one part of the throat halyards to make room for the shot-line, and hauling on this, brought out a tail-block with a rope rove through it. Secured to the block was a small blackboard with the following printed instructions:

“Make the tail-block fast to the lower mast, well up. If the masts are gone, then to the best place you can find. Cast off shot-line, see that the rope in the block runs free, and show the signal to the shore.”

We secured the tail-block as directed, just be-

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low the hounds of the mast, and waved to the men on the beach. Then the rope travelled and out came the end of a three-inch hawser, with another tally-board which read:

“Make this hawser fast about two feet above the tail-block, see all clear and that the rope in the block runs free, and show signal to the shore.”

We followed these instructions, advised by Hooper, who had climbed up and who seemed to know the drill. Then out came what he called a breeches-buoy—a cork ring such as Gamble had floated to me, but with four lifts supporting it to a travelling block on the hawser, and a canvas attachment depending from the under side resembling in shape a pair of swimming trunks. Its purpose was obvious—a man could get into the ring, insert his legs in the breeches, and be pulled safely through the surf.

“Who goes first?” I asked, thinking—I could not help it, having been laughed at—of the painful spectacle of a lady in such a contrivance.

“The boy,” answered Hooper. “I must go last, and you fellows must stay by the women. We’ll tell him to ask the men to send out the life-car and take us all at once. Mast’s liable to fall

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at any time, and there are three women and a sick man here."

"Come on, Archibald," I sang out as I descended to him. "You're to go first. Mr. Hooper won't touch you now. Come on."

He gladly climbed a few ratlins, for the seas were drenching him; but going ashore in the breeches-buoy was another proposition, and he flatly refused.

I was not in the mood to waste time upon him. There was danger in further delay; our bare feet were numb with pain from standing on the ratlins; we were hungry and blue in the lips from cold and exposure; the ladies were suffering keenly, and Mrs. Hooper was in an agony of wifely anxiety about her husband, who really needed medical attention. So I grimly asked the group for a pencil, and Mrs. Hooper found one in her pocket. Taking it aloft, I scratched—hoping it was legible—the request for the life-car on one of the black tally-boards, which I fastened firmly to the lifts of the breeches-buoy, and with Gamble's help overhauled the throat halyards until I reached the end of the rope. With this I descended—Gamble following with the other part—and said to the boy:

"If you resist we'll put it round your neck."

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“What you goin’ to do?” he cried, awed by our set faces and the menacing preparations. “Let me alone. Don’t you touch me. Annie, make him stop.”

While he protested I passed the end around his waist and knotted it at his shoulder-blades. His resistance was vocal only, but he clung tightly to the shrouds until Gamble and I, pulling down on the other part of the rope, tore him away. His sister looked on, implacable in her reserve, saying nothing. Mrs. Hooper pleaded mildly not to hurt him, and Miss Nellie looked frightened, while Hooper, above, called down to “bowse him up.”

As he rolled past the after-shroud and swung far to leeward, a piercing scream left his lips, and as he went aloft in irregular curves the scream was repeated with every breath until it took on the hoarse intonation noticeable in the squealing of a pig in the hands of a butcher. It continued—peal after peal—after we had hoisted him to the top-block; and when I had climbed to his level, it gathered force borne of my proximity and became an inarticulate, squalling roar.

Gamble had remained below to slack away, and Hooper was unable to assist; so upon me alone de-

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volved the task of getting him into the breeches-buoy.

“In you go,” I yelled at him. “Go ashore and send out that life-car.”

“I won’t—I won’t—I won’t,” he shrieked. “Annie, Annie—don’t let him!” Then the words merged into the squall of fright.

The breeches-buoy was just beneath him. I gripped the shrouds firmly with my knees, and holding on with one hand, reached for his throat with the other. As I felt the soft flesh yield under my grip, and saw his face grow red, then purple, I felt dimly and momentarily the murder impulse—the desire to kill inherent in us all—the legacy from our cave-dwelling ancestors. But I was a civilized man, with a long line of civilized grandfathers, and when his tongue began to protrude I released the pressure.

“Will you go?” I shouted.

He choked, sputtered, and began his howl, but did not finish. I closed down again, and this time held the stricture until the clutch of his own fingers over mine relaxed; then I gave him a breath, shut off again, and sang out “Lower away, handsomely.” As Gamble slacked him down, I guided his limp legs into the buoy, took my fingers from

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his throat, and holding him firmly by the collar, unhitched him, and waved to the men ashore. They were evidently aware of our trouble, for they instantly let go the upper part of the whip, which had held the breeches-buoy close to the tail-block, and Archibald shot down the inclined trolley fifty feet before his vocal powers were again in working order; but then it sounded—shriek after shriek of animal terror coming back on the gale, fainter and fainter as they hauled him shoreward. The yacht was rolling with the heave of the sea, and as the mast inclined, the hawser would slacken, dropping him within reach of the combers; as she rolled backward and tautened it, up would go Archibald high above the hawser, his fat legs pointing heavenward like steeples out of plumb. Then he would fall with a jerk which strained the hitches on the mast. In the breakers he was immersed half the time, but not until he stood up on the beach did his protest cease. And thus the product of motherly coddling, mismanagement, and inborn viciousness was rescued from a watery grave.

I had known the mind of a righteous judge, and the official calm of a hangman; but now that the nauseous job was done, I was faint with disgust; though when I descended past Hooper, and

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heard him chuckling joyously, and was heartened thereby, I concluded it was partly due to an empty stomach.

The life-car, a short boat with a whale-back deck and ventilated hatch, came out, slung by rings to the hawser. With less trouble than might have been expected after Archibald's example, we induced the ladies—who had certainly shown wonderful courage and fortitude—to climb the rigging and be assisted into the car. In spite of his intention to be last to leave the yacht, poor Hooper was first, being unable to lower himself, unaided, into the hatch. His wife followed, then Miss Bronson, Miss Runyon, and Gamble. It was given me to support Miss Bronson with an arm about her waist, as she stepped from the rigging to the deck of the car; and as she looked into my face before going down I saw the twitching of the mouth and the pleading in the the eyes that I had once ascribed to her sense of loss. She did not speak, nor did I; but the incident softened me, and prepared me for what happened in the car.

When all were down, I signalled to the shore, descended the hatch, and secured the cover by its inside bar according to Hooper's directions. Though the hatch cover was pierced with small



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holes, it was very dark in there, and I only knew, as I crouched down and gripped a handhold, that Hooper and Gamble were on the opposite side with one of the ladies, while on each side of me were the other two.

The car started; and, however it might have appeared to observers ashore, the first part of the passage was no more uncomfortable than would be a trolley-ride. Our united weight kept us below the hawser—fairly steady, and there was not even the rapid, toboggan-like rush down the incline which had afflicted Archibald; for he had been hung to a travelling pulley, while the life-car was supported by two rings. The grating of these rings over the strands of the hawser prevented conversation, and I was not surprised when my right-hand neighbour leaned my way as though to speak in my ear; but I was much surprised when an arm slid around my neck, soft breath fanned my face, and lips kissed me. I could not tell in the darkness which one it was, but as some comment was required, I brought my mouth close to her ear and whispered:

“Afraid?”

“No, not while you’re with me,” came the whispered answer.

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“Must be Annie,” I thought, with my heart thumping. “Wonder what’s brought her ’round?”

“Say, Will,” came the whisper in my ear, “isn’t he horrid?”

It was not Miss Bronson; it was Miss Nellie again, talking to her beloved Gamble. Now was the time for an honourable man to undeceive her, but I was weak and fallible; I wanted to know who was “horrid,” and why; and I was also governed by fear of the mutual embarrassment which would follow her discovery of whom she had kissed. So I remained silent.

“Isn’t he mean?” she asked again.

“Yes, of course. Who?”

“Mr. Somers.”

“What’s he done now?”

“Why, he’s treating her awful—won’t speak to her—won’t look at her—insulted her at the hotel. She told me so—she’s breaking her heart—and he isn’t worth it, even though he did help you save my life. If ’twas me, I’d never look at him again; but she accepted Mrs. Hooper’s invitation just to be near him—to make it up, you see. And he won’t forgive her.”

“Won’t forgive her?” I gasped. “What’s she done?”

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"Nothing at all. But—she didn't tell this. Her brother told us in the cabin—he was proposing just as she sat down on a pin which Archie had fixed for him, and she had to jump and run. Now, she just couldn't stay there, could she?"

"No, I should think not."

"And the big goose, who loves every hair of her head—I know, because he shouted for her in the water, thinking I was she—don't know any more than to get mad. And she can't explain, can she?"

"Ought to be kicked," I managed to say. "Shall I tell him?"

"Not for the world. She'd never forgive me. You're not supposed to know. I'll manage it. I'll be the good fairy. She's a dear girl; she sent you back to me where you belonged—you jealous ninny! I never cared for him; but he helped you, and I'll be good to him."

"You're a dear girl yourself," I said, and as I meant to forestall her efforts in my behalf, and as there was something due me for having "helped" Gamble in saving her life, and as the whispering lips were very close, I took my vicarious reward right there. Then the life-car struck a sea, and the rest of the trip was a tumble through the surf.

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Among his youthful friends Archibald is now a hero. The reporters interviewed him, and described his perilous ride through the breakers in behalf of the cowardly "grown-ups" who waited for the life-car. He is soon to become my brother-in-law; but, though the sentence of death still hangs over him, I doubt that it will ever be carried out. For he fears me as his patron saint is said to fear the good Book, and nothing short of physical restraint will induce him to remain within sound of my voice.

## POLARITY

### A TALE OF TWO BRUNETTES

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I TOSSED my half-smoked cigar overboard. It had not availed to increase my courage, though lighted for the purpose.

“Miss Durand,” I began, desperately, with the painful fluttering of the heart which attends on most confessions, “do you know that I invited you out here with an object in view—other than the mere inspection of my yacht?”

“Indeed?” The dark eye-brows lifted slightly, and the darker eyes glanced swiftly into mine, and dropped.

“Yes, and it was in furtherance of this object that I sent my sailing-master and the crew ashore for the new sails, and the steward for provisions—though both could wait.”

“I thought you were ignoring the proprieties,” she answered, with an increase of colour. “I am sure every glass on the beach has been levelled at us.”

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“Perhaps—perhaps, Miss Durand; I am sorry if it will embarrass you; but I felt that I must see you alone, and that has been impossible since our first meeting. Do you know that I disliked you then?”

“Why, Mr. Townsend,” she exclaimed, sitting bolt upright in the deck-chair, “I did not know it. Is it kind of you to tell me this?”

“It is my own fault—not yours,” I answered, hurriedly; “let me explain.” Then, while the beautiful face was half turned away from me, and the shapely fingers of one white hand were closing and unclosing nervously over those of the other, I blundered through a long explanation of a pet theory, arising from something I had heard, or read, in my boyhood, concerning the physiological hindrance to true love, or even agreement, when lovers happened to be of the same colour of eyes and hair. I told her that my theory had been justified by experience and observation—that, as a boy, I had never been able to patch up a tiff, or a misunderstanding, with a dark-haired girl, but that the sunny-haired kind were my friends, because—I felt sure—I was a pronounced brunette myself, black-eyed and swarthy. Later, I had noticed that all my married friends who seemed unhappily mated were

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of the same type—both blonde, or both brunette. “And, Miss Durand,” I concluded, “I met you with this theory firmly intrenched in my mind, and avoided you for a while on general principles. I felt that we could never become friends. Then—do you know what changed me? I learned that you, in your life at sea with your father, had become a better sailor than I—which could not but impress an enthusiastic yachtsman. I enjoyed your conversation, cultivated your acquaintance, learned daily of new beauties of character, realized to the full all your sweetness and nobility of soul, and ended with a complete surrender and shattering of my theories. Miss Durand, you have conquered, captivated me——”

“Goodness!” she exclaimed.

I was fairly well launched in what I considered a dignified avowal of love, when this remark cut me short. It was not in answer to me, however, as for an instant I thought. The yacht was heeling, and a cool pressure of swiftly moving air fanned our faces. Springing to my feet, I looked toward the shore. It was hidden by a blackish-gray wall of cloud which also obliterated from view the mountain-top inland. The lower part of it was marked by slanting and nearly parallel darker lines of de-

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scending rain, and beneath it was a white, frothy turmoil of water.

“A squall,” I said, “and a bad one. Better go below, Miss Durand, out of the wet. I’ll stay on deck.”

“What chain are you riding by?” she asked, with no regard to my advice.

“I don’t know. Short, I believe.”

“Pay out, Mr. Townsend; she will need it all.” Miss Durand was compelled to scream this, as the squall was upon us. It became nearly as dark as night, and while the whistling fury of wind pelted us with horizontal rain, and my companion, indifferent to the drenching, clung to the binnacle, studying the compass and the direction of the blast, I fought my way forward, toward the windlass. Urgent as was the need of prompt action, I could not but note, in passing her, the perfection of a figure shown to me in all its harmony of swelling curve and rounded hollow, as the wet-clinging fabric of her dress was pressed about her by the wind. She was not frightened, but the wide-open dark eyes, and parted lips, showing but two of the white teeth, gave the lovely face an expression of sailorly anxiety, charming in her—this child of the sea. She was, indeed, I thought, a crea-



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ture to live, and work; and fight for, if not to die for.

“Go below, Miss Durand,” I shouted, as I covered the forecastle hatch; but she did not move. The yacht carried a modern windlass, over a sprocket-like wheel of which the chain led from the hawse-pipe to the locker below. I knew by the jarring vibration of the lever as I grasped it that the anchor was dragging. Unlocking the windlass, I let the chain run. It was too dark to see, and I could only guess at the shackles as they whizzed out; so after a conjectural thirty fathoms had been added to the chain, I tightened the compressor and held it. The anchor still dragged, and I let the wheel spin. Again I held it, and again felt the jarring of the anchor bounding along the bottom. It seemed to be striking rocks, and resolving to pay out all the chain at once, I loosened the compressor, took my hand off the lever, and stood up, confident, with amateurish confidence, that the end of the cable was secured to the pawl-post below. In ten seconds that end came up, barely cleared my face, dealt the deck a blow that sounded like a pistol report, and shot out the hawse-pipe in a glow of sparks. It was a lubberly oversight—of my sailing-master or mate.

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"We're adrift! I've slipped the chain," I shouted, running aft to Miss Durand.

I could not hear clearly in that howling wind all she said in reply, yet I thought that some part of her answer formed a context to the word "fool," which I was sure I heard quite clearly. But she beckoned me close to her, and called in my ear:

"Hog-back Reef is but a quarter mile to leeward. Come forward. We must get her before the wind. The wheel is hard-a-port."

What courage and self-possession she had! I understood her; the schooner was stripped to her spars, and the only plan was to stand forward as near the bows as we could so that our bodies might catch the wind and throw her around before it. Then we could steer. We clung to the forestay, and watched the yacht swing broadside to the storm, but beyond that we could not turn.

"Lay out," screamed Miss Durand.

I obeyed her, and erect at the extreme end of the jib-boom had the satisfaction of seeing the little schooner pay off. Dim and obscure in the gloom I saw the figure of Miss Durand staggering aft against the pressure of wind, and coming in, joined her. She had taken the wheel, and now called:

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“Light the binnacle—quick! Then watch for the reef. I think we can clear it.”

She steered with the wind on the port quarter, while I took the lamp below, lighted, and replaced it in the binnacle. As I raised up, she pointed to starboard. Hog-back Reef, an outcrop of black rocks in a swirling, boiling yeast of agitated water, was but a half-length away.

“We must let her drive, and keep off the bottom,” she screamed. “I know the channel—east-southeast now, and when we pass the beacon to port we can square away. Keep a lookout; I will steer.”

I felt that steering would be more in keeping with my strength, and offered to relieve her, but she motioned me away, and I obeyed. I could not help it.

The yacht was charging along at about a ten-knot rate, and I watched through the darkness and fog-like spindrift for the beacon-house. In five minutes it loomed up, huge and shadowy on the port bow, and I pointed to it. She nodded, shifted the wheel, and called me to her.

“Due southeast for two miles now,” she cried in my ear; “then we are at sea. Will you steer? My arms ache.”

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I gladly relieved her. She had already found the course, and I held the yacht to it, while she leaned against the companionway and peered ahead. What was in her mind I could not guess. This squall had interrupted a proposal of marriage, which her woman's understanding must have apprised her was coming. And I had not put the matter in shape to be answered, and surely could not until the wind moderated and our safety was assured. But there came to my mind the favourite situations in Clark Russell's charming sea stories—a young man and woman alone somewhere at sea, on a derelict, a raft, or an island—and from the resemblance of our own position to that of his characters I drew hope and courage; for out of the perils of the sea grew most logically the loves of his heroes and heroines.

A curling, shallow-water sea was following the yacht, and the spray, colder than the summer rain, was chilling me to the bone. Miss Durand must have suffered more, and I called to her:

“Won't you go below? It is dangerous to expose yourself this way.”

She moved to the binnacle, looked at the compass, and then at me, with eye-brows knitted.

“Keep her on her course,” she cried sharply.

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I was a point and a half off the course. Bowing to her in acknowledgment of my carelessness, I brought the yacht back, and repeated my advice.

“No,” was her answer; “not with you at the wheel—not until we have sea room.”

This I thought was rather unkind, but I forgave her; she was wet, cold, and in a most embarrassing position.

The first violence of the squall had passed, and it grew lighter, enabling us to see landmarks each side and ahead; but a gray gale of wind was left, which drove us down the channel, past the spar-buoy off the light-house point—where the keeper came out and waved to us—past the channel buoy, which I would have run down had not Miss Durand screamed at me and assisted at the wheel, and out beyond the whistling buoy that marked the entrance to the channel. We were at sea—a half confident commodore of a yacht club, and a much out-of-sorts young woman—in a sailless schooner-yacht, with a scant supply of provisions and water. Yet I doubted not of our rescue; breezy old Captain Durand would charter every steam yacht and tug within reach of a telegram to search for his daughter; and I imagined what my blowing-up would be

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when I came within range of his quarter-deck vocabulary.

An off-shore sea was now raising, and the little schooner began to heave unpleasantly. Miss Durand left her position, and asked: "Have you any canvas aboard—a storm mainsail or trysail?"

"Not a rag," I answered. "I condemned every sail in the suit, and sold them yesterday for junk."

"Have you a sea anchor?"

"A sea anchor? I don't know. What is it?"

With a gesture of impatience she opened the companionway and went below.

"Poor girl!" I thought. "It certainly is enough to ruffle the sweetest of tempers. But what on earth is a sea anchor? It isn't mentioned in the books."

She came up in a few moments and said:

"I have rummaged for material. There are tools in the forecastle. You can not use a hatch, and the cabin table is too small. You must take down a stateroom door, bore holes in each corner, make a bridle and weight one side. There is a hawser in the forecastle that will answer for a riding line. I will steer."

"What for? What do you want me to do?"

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“Make a drag—to hold her head to sea. We are driving out too fast. When you have rigged and ridden to a sea anchor, you will have an immense advantage. Your club will call you their admiral.”

Not even the effort to make herself heard above the storm could qualify the contempt which she put into these words, and coming from her, for whom I am confident I would have given my life, it hurt me beyond expression. But I was of age, and with a certain experience of the world and of women, I knew that without her respect I was valueless to her, and my love futile; and this respect I could not ask—I must compel it. So with as much dignity as a man may assume while grinding a three-foot wheel right and left, I said:

“Miss Durand, I can understand and appreciate your superior nautical knowledge. I have often heard your father speak of you as a better sailor and navigator than himself, and I feel deeply culpable and sorry for our present position. I admit I am solely to blame. Yet I hope that I do not deserve all your sarcasm.”

“Port! Port!” she answered, seizing the wheel. A choppy sea broke over the port quarter, drenching us both, and rolled forward. It was

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with difficulty that, with her help, I prevented the yacht broaching to. Again I had shown my incapacity, and my ears burned.

“Go to work,” she said, sharply.

I relinquished the wheel to her, and went below, where, in an unenviable frame of mind, I ruined a mahogany stateroom door with an auger. I could not remember all of her instructions, and was too proud to ask; but I possessed a fairly logical mind, and reasoning out the points in the contrivance as I progressed, soon had it finished. In the fore-castle was the tow-line she had mentioned, but I captiously decided not to use it. Hawasers should not be wet until necessary. I knew that much.

I brought the door on deck with a shackle fast to the knob for a weight, unrove the fore-throat halyards, and bent it to the bridle I had rigged from the corners of the door in spite of her screaming protest that the rope was too weak.

“Miss Durand,” I said, coldly but politely, as I struggled up to her against the wind, “I am the owner of this yacht and all the ropes on board. I am now ready. If you will kindly put the wheel over, I will throw out the drag as soon as we lose headway.” She ground the wheel to starboard with a vigour and strength which surprised me, while



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her face assumed a stony expression. She was not beautiful in her present mood, and the shock of the change pained me, angry as I felt.

Sea after sea, green and solid, boarded the yacht as she rounded to and rolled in the trough, and I was twice knocked from my feet before I managed to launch the door over the bow and catch a turn with the line, which, by slacking with a taut strain, brought the bow slowly to the wind. When the whole length, about twenty fathoms, was out I made fast, and two minutes later realized that I had made another mistake, and that Miss Durand was again right. The rope was too weak, and parted at the chock.

With an inward malediction on my stubbornness, I scrambled aft—past Miss Durand, whose impassive face was averted—and below, where, in a state of unstable equilibrium, I duplicated my work on the other door. The job took me an hour, for the yacht behaved like a cradle in the trough of the rising sea. Carrying the door up the companionway, flushed and fatigued from my exertions, I said to Miss Durand, with a poor show of politeness: “I need help to get that hawser up; will you go down and light the coils out of the locker?”

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She had lashed herself to the wheel-box grating, and, after a searching look into my face which puzzled me, undid the lashing and went below, while I staggered forward with my burden. Lifting the forecastle hatch, I received the end from her, and after a difficult quarter hour's dragging—during which the forecastle was nearly flooded—had the hawser coiled on deck. With experience to guide me this time, I passed the end out the vacant hawse-pipe and back over the rail before bending on. Then, throwing the drag over as before, and slacking out all the line, I again brought the yacht's nose to the sea and made fast. Bound not to earn her criticism if I could help it, I wrapped the hawser snugly with canvas—parcelling, I think they call it—and slacked this wrapping into the hawse-pipe to take the chafe.

The little schooner rode the seas nobly, and my chagrin at Miss Durand's attitude was replaced, in part, by a seamanly pride in the success of my efforts. She would share in the benefit and *must* accord me a share in the credit. Though without her superb knowledge of the sea and of ships, I felt that I could be of use to her in this crisis, and selfishly hoped that our voyage would continue long enough for me to offset, by intelligent work and

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devotion, my ridiculous blunder in slipping the chain. "She was educated at sea," I mused, "and places seamanship at the head of manly accomplishments. I have been found wanting in seamanship; consequently I have dropped in her esteem and must be punished." Miss Durand was almost forgiven—would have been wholly so had I been quite sure of my premises.

Mounting the fore-rigging, I searched closely the gray expanse of crested sea between myself and the rocky shore fast disappearing in the gloom of the evening. There was no sign of sail or smoke to indicate a search for us, and descending, I went aft to Miss Durand, who was again seated on the grating. Her hat was blown away, and her hair sadly disarranged by the wind; she had not laboured as I had, her lips were blue from cold and she shivered palpably. A great pity possessed me, and I forgot everything except that I loved her.

"Miss Durand," I exclaimed, "this will not do. You are suffering. We are in for a night at sea; but she rides easy. Go down, and I will stand watch. You will find food of some kind in the steward's pantry—and stimulants; you need them—and then go to bed. There are two staterooms."

With a look in her eyes which might have meant

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anger or scorn or fright—or all three, so strange and unpleasant it seemed—she stood erect and drew back; then, with a little grimace which certainly indicated disgust and aversion, she passed me and went below.

Hurt beyond measure by her manner, incapable of connected thought, I took her place on the grating, where I sat until my limbs were stiff with cold; but I cared nothing for it; her insolence had fired my brain and numbed my heart. The chilly wind could not blow cold enough for me.

I heard the sound of rattling dishes, and knew that she was helping herself in the pantry; then darkness descended and the cabin became quiet. Though the gale was moderating, the sea was getting higher and the temperature lower, and at last, chilled to the bone by the wet and cold, I was forced to pace up and down. The exercise brought coherence to my thoughts, and I reviewed what had passed.

The searching scrutiny of my face when I had asked her to go into the forecastle, and back of this, the stony expression of her own face when I had disagreed with her about the riding line—these things certainly came of her distrust of my competence; but why was she so severe? Her dictatorial

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manner on the run out was strictly compatible with her superior seamanship, but why had she called me a fool? I was sure that she had—just for slipping the cable. Do accidents and mistakes never occur at sea? What had changed her so—she so kind and gracious, who had shown a preference for my society, so delicately indicated, yet so marked that it had led me to hope that she loved me—that had induced me to dare the conventionalities and ask for her hand on board my yacht; and that proposal—what had I said?

Slowly and painfully after the excitement—word by word—my half-uttered declaration of love came back to me. “That was it,” I groaned; “that upset her. I didn’t finish, and up to the interruption it was grossest personal flattery. Great heavens, can I undo it? It was insulting, under the circumstances.”

Before midnight I had decided what it was best to do—finish the tale of love at the first opportunity and set my motives right; and no matter what her reception should be, to repeat it again and again and assume such a dignity and treat her with such deference as would in time shame her out of her injustice to me—in short, to live it down. She was worth waiting for.

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This question settled, other things demanded attention. I had not eaten for twelve hours and was faint with hunger, and in danger of pneumonia from exposure. Then, too, we had been drifting half the night without showing a light. With as little noise as possible, I procured the riding light from the lamp locker in the forecastle—luckily finding dry matches in a bunk—and ran it up on the bight of the staysail halyards, as I had seen done by my men. Going down the hatch again, and aft into the pantry, I made a substantial lunch after warming myself with a glass of whisky.

I now wanted a smoke; but the cigars in my pocket were sodden. Though there were pipes and tobacco in the sailing-master's room and the fore-castle, I had always a distaste for another man's pipe, and knew that I should not like the tobacco. The thought of my own fragrant meerschaum and Turkish Mixture on my stateroom desk led me into the dark cabin, where I stopped short; for my way was impeded by wet skirts and other clothing hanging from lines stretched across the room.

With two to choose from, Miss Durand would hardly occupy my stateroom. Her nautical mind would enable her to readily distinguish mine by its appurtenances and position to port, from the vacant

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stateroom to starboard. Yet I must make no mistake; I had blundered too much already. I remained perfectly quiet to make sure of her whereabouts by her breathing, but heard no sound other than the crashing of the water alongside. She was either a soft sleeper, or she was wide awake, listening. The latter possibility decided me.

“Miss Durand!” I called softly, so as not to waken her if she *was* asleep. “Are you awake? Which room are you in?”

There was no answer. She was evidently asleep, I thought, and probably—almost certainly—in the spare room. The craving for a smoke becoming stronger by the delay, I decided to step quietly into my room, secure the pipe, and decamp without disturbing her.

As I passed the threshold a voice—a low, hard, unfeminine voice—said, “You scoundrel!” Then a deafening report filled my ears and my cap left my head, while the room was lighted by an instantaneous flash which went out as it came, leaving blacker darkness behind. But the flash had disclosed to me a white, set face with gleaming teeth between parted lips, and glittering eyes glancing along the barrel of a revolver held by a shapely hand, behind which—in the berth and half-covered

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by the blanket—was a shapelier arm and swelling white shoulders and bust. She had taken my room and guarded it with my own revolver, which had a place on the desk beside the pipe.

“Miss Durand,” I shouted, “don’t shoot me. I only wanted a smoke—my pipe and tobacco.”

“Leave this cabin as you value your life.”

I left it and floundered into the forecastle, where I sat on a locker, trembling in every limb, perspiring at every pore, for ten minutes before capable of another voluntary action. If ever in my life I wanted a smoke I wanted it then, and when I could, fired up a sailor’s pipe, felt of a furrow in my hair over a hot line of blistered scalp, and smoked feverishly. Under the influence of the tobacco I soon grew calmer and went on deck. There was nothing in sight, the lamp burned brightly, and the gale was going down, so I descended, for the cold wind seemed to cut me to the bone.

I sat on the locker smoking continuously until daylight, and in that time went through a process of retrospection and heart dissection that no man is equal to until face to face with some great calamity or loss. At first came a great sadness, and back of it were dead memories of our walks, and talks, and dances together, in which her sweet, imperious



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beauty and gracious charm of manner appealed to me to make excuses—to forgive her. She was mistaken, but justifiably so. But oftener and oftener as I brooded and called up these memories of the past, the loveliness and softness in the face of the vision I conjured would give way to the baleful combination of fear, suspicion, and destructive hate that I had seen by the pistol flash. Then a fury of soul possessed me, and thoughts came to me of which I must not speak. Then melancholy, and weakness which brought tears; then a permanent calm. And in this calm I forced her face of beauty from me, and in its stead, enshrined in hatred, placed a picture that I meant should stay forever—a picture of gleaming teeth between parted lips, and glittering, murderous eyes in a white, set face. Then, and not until then, I perceived the grim humour of the situation, and laughed long and loudly. It was a laugh that must have found an echo in the infernal regions.

At daylight I went on deck. The gale had become a gentle breeze, and the yacht rolled in the trough of a greasy swell, heaving seaward. The horizon was hidden by haze, here and there thickened to genuine fog, and overhead was promise of a bright day and sunshine. I took down the riding

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light, hauled in the now useless drag, and limbered my stiffened joints by smartly pacing the deck. In about an hour Miss Durand came up the companionway.

She had made the best toilet possible, but looked wretched and ill. Black half circles were under her eyes, and her pale face, besides wearing the expression of discomfort following the recent donning of damp clothing, showed pinched and drawn, indicating a sleepless night. But any pity I might have felt for her as a woman was forbidden by the sight of my revolver tucked into her belt—obviously to keep me in order. With as sarcastic a smile as I could assume I advanced and said:

“Good-morning, Miss Durand. I see—pardon the allusion—that you are carrying side-arms to-day. Do you think you would like another shot—a daylight shot—at me?”

“Up to the time I heard you laughing, sir, I thought one shot might be enough. Be assured that the next time I shall aim lower than your cap.”

“Thank you for the warning. I am to consider, I suppose, that you did not mean to kill me. As for laughing, Miss Durand,” I added, seriously,

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“believe me, I was not. It was a song that you heard—the swan song of a shattered ideal. But in your own behalf will you not say something—something that will explain or possibly excuse your shooting at a man who, up to that moment, would have defended your honour and safety with his life, a man whose only fault was the innocent one of entering his own room after satisfying himself by your silence that it was empty. It is all a mystery, and yet—I wish to be just.”

“Mr. Townsend,” she answered, in the incisive tone which none but well-bred women can assume, “prior to your admission that you invited me on board your yacht, and sent your crew ashore in order that I should be alone with you, I thought you a gentleman; when you slipped the chain I merely thought you a fool, and, I believe, called you one in the excitement of the moment; but when you pretended ignorance of a sea anchor and then constructed one, when you purposely wasted one stateroom door so that the other must be taken also, I concluded that you had purposely wasted your cable as well, and that you were a quick-witted villain, able and ready to take any advantage of time, weather, or circumstance to further your ends. As to my taking

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your room, it is due myself to say that I found the berth in the other drenched with water from the open dead-light above."

She had explained it all. On the evidence of a series of accidents she had judged me guilty of motives for which men have been lynched; yet her denunciation brought no increase of anger or humiliation; I was beyond reach of an insult from her now; only the terrible humour of it appealed to me, as before, and again I laughed, bitterly and sardonically.

"I see," I said. "To attempt to refute this would be pure folly. I shall go down now and cook our breakfast; but I feel that after the experience of the night and your expressed intention to aim lower, I must ask you to place my pipe and tobacco-bag on the cabin table, where I can get them without risking my life."

"You may cook what you wish for yourself," she answered, impassively. "I shall eat what I can find and when I please. Your pipe and tobacco-bag you will find in the binnacle, where you placed them yesterday."

In the binnacle! So I had—when we sat together at the anchorage and she had gently hinted that I smoke a cigar, as less likely to scent her

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clothing. I looked in and found both, snug and dry.

“Miss Durand,” I said, “I must assert, on my honour, whether you believe me or not, that I had forgotten this, and supposed them still in the state-room.”

“That will do, sir; I do not care to discuss the subject.” She turned her back to me as she said this, and I went forward, for there was nothing more to be said.

Down below I made a startling discovery. I had eaten all the cold meat I could find in the night, and there was no more of it; and beyond four or five potatoes, a small piece of bacon, a little coffee, and some crackers—just enough for a meal—there was no food in the yacht. Why the steward had allowed the provisions to get so low I could not understand; though he had spoken of the shortage, and I had gladly sent him ashore. Sounding the tank, I found it half full. “Water enough for a week,” I thought, “if we do not waste it.”

I lighted a fire, cooked what I had found, and set the table; then, stepping on deck, invited Miss Durand to precede me in eating her share, at the same time apprising her of the state of the larder. She walked away from me, and looked over the taff-

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rail without answering. Nothing could be done with such a girl, so I ate my breakfast—putting her half in the oven—and came up. She immediately descended, and I, smoking on the wheel-box, heard again the rattle of dishes. She was not going hungry. Soon an increase of smoke from the galley chimney told me of extra fire below.

An hour later she came up, arrayed in the yacht's ensign, which, with the pistol, she had belted around her. It was large enough to cover her, and, with her dark eyes and hair, I confessed to myself, made a tasteful combination of colour. In one hand she carried a bucket of steaming water, and in the other her dress—a dark wash-fabric—and a piece of soap.

“Miss Durand,” I said, as I realized her object, “allow me to suggest that we are not yet rescued, and are short of water, as well as of food.”

“Mind your own business,” she snapped. “I am not going to look like a fright.” I smiled and subsided. She washed the salt from the dress, rinsed it with more fresh water, rigged a clothes-line between the fore and main rigging, and hung it up, dripping, so that it would dry without creasing—a trick she must have learned at sea. Then she stood a moment, musing, and went down, com-

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ing up with more fresh water and a skirt, which she also washed and hung out. Down she went again—the spirit of wash-day was upon her—and appeared with a garment, which I, having sisters, knew for a corset-cover. This was followed by the corset.

Again she descended, and beginning to wonder where this young woman would stop, I filled my pipe anew and took a position where I could gaze over the stern while she flitted back and forth from bucket to cabin, washing out and hanging up whatever was next on the list. When she descended at last and remained longer in the cabin, I ventured to peep forward. Flying balloon-like in the morning breeze were frilled and beribboned garments—known, I believe, under the generic name of *lingerie*—a generous display, which lacked but stockings to complete the list.

Would Miss Durand take off her shoes and stockings? She would, and did, but donned instead my sailing-master's long rubber boots. This was gratifying, and I breathed a bachelor sigh of relief as she stumped up the stairs and went forward. Soon the stockings were added to the wash, and with her shoes, garters, and belt—the latter replaced by a piece of spun-yarn rove through the

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trigger-guard of the pistol—well rinsed of salt water and arranged in sunny spots on the hot deck, she stood back and surveyed her work with the most pleasant expression of face that I had seen since the squall.

“Going to hang yourself up, Miss Durand?” I asked, with a malicious grin.

I had probably been farthest from her thoughts—otherwise she might not have tied that guardian weapon so firmly to her waist—and a startled look in her eyes gave way to one of angry contempt. She said nothing, but walked forward; while I, knocking the ashes from my pipe, began pacing the deck. At the first turn, I made out, directly ahead, half hidden by the haze, a black steamer. Behind her was thicker fog from which she had come, and ahead of her was more into which she would plunge in less than ten minutes. She was crossing our bow, diagonally, fully three miles away—too far to see us with no canvas set. But she might see a flag. Miss Durand, too, had observed her.

“We must signal,” I said, as I approached her.

“You have a cannon?”

“But no powder. You must go below, Miss Durand, and throw the ensign into the forecastle where I can get it.” A blaze of scorn came from



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her eyes. "Go down below, Miss Durand," I continued, excitedly. "I will respect your privacy; I will return you the ensign or your clothes. Hurry, please!"

"I will not. What do you think?"

"Hang it!" I yelled. "Keep the pistol. Go below and take off the flag."

"I will not."

"Then, by Heaven! I know what I'll do. I've been too long at sea with you." I quickly untied the after end of the clothes-line from the rigging, ran forward with it—clothes and all—and had fastened it to one end of the fore-signal halyards, when she said, close behind me, "You let my things alone!" Turning, I saw her struggling with the pistol, trying to stretch the string enough to enable it to bear on me.

"You murdering tigress!" I growled insanely. "Shoot me, will you?"

I hardly know what happened; but of this I am sure, for it is all that I remember of my thoughts during the struggle: I used no more force than was necessary to twist the pistol from her hand and hold it while I undid the granny's knot—which she, being a woman, had tied in the spun-yarn. Whether she meant to shoot me or not I can not

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say, but my face felt the heat of the explosion which occurred as she resisted me, and I afterward found grains of powder embedded in the skin.

She sank down on the cabin-trunk, holding her disordered raiment about her and sobbing hysterically, while I ran the wash to half-mast, unbending the forward end of the line from the rigging, and letting it go up with the other part of the halyards. Three minutes later a cloud of steam left the steamer, followed by the faint toot of her whistle. We were seen, and I walked aft, too enraged to offer to lower the clothes.

Still sobbing, she arose, recaptured and donned her spun-yarn belt, cast off the turns from the belaying-pin, and with shaking, bungling fingers hauled down on the signal halyards and untied the knot at the lower end of the clothes-line. In doing so, she released the other part of the halyards, and a fresher puff of wind coming with a weather roll of the yacht, this part went aloft with a whir, jerking the end from her fingers just as she had cleared the knot. She sprang frantically to catch it, released her hold on the clothes-line, then turned and gazed blankly at her apparel dropping gently on the surface of the smooth swell thirty feet to leeward.

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I was a man—though an angry one—and she a woman, conquered, frightened to tears, and arrayed in most unconventional raiment; and I would have rescued her clothing had I been able to; but both boats were ashore, I could not swim, and nothing on board would reach. Too proud to appeal to me, she seated herself again, with a face white and stony as marble—a statue-like image of misery and despair. Before the steamer was within hailing distance, the last bubble from the sunken clothing had burst on the surface.

The steamer was one of the two-masted, single-funnelled passenger boats which ply up and down the coast, and her rail was lined with men, women, and children, as she surged up and stopped alongside.

“What’s the trouble?” sang out a uniformed captain on her bridge.

“Blown out yesterday by a squall—no canvas, no grub, and very little water. Can you tow me in?”

“We’re bound to Boston. How’ll that do?”

“How far?”

“’Bout a hundred miles.”

“Have you a stewardess on board?”

“Yes.”

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“Very well. I want passage in for this lady, with what care and clothing she may require; and I want a man to help me steer, and grub and water for both. How much?”

He named a figure, which, though high, I was willing to pay and acceded to. The steamer’s main gaff was guyed out with one vang, the tackle of the other singled up, and a chair hung to the end and lowered to our deck.

“Now, Miss Durand,” I asked, “are you ready?”

“I don’t want to go!” she moaned. “I can not—I can not—all those men!” She burst out crying again.

“Miss Durand,” I said, gravely, but firmly, “you must; there is no food on board. I am responsible for your being here, and will see that you are clothed and sent to your father; but you are responsible for your present condition, and also for the fact that I am anxious to end our association. I was about to ask you to become my wife when the squall prevented me. I am glad now that it did so. You have misunderstood my most innocent actions, misjudged me, insulted me, wronged me—as well as wronged yourself—and twice you have attempted my life. You must leave

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my yacht—for your own sake as much as for mine.”

She dried her eyes with a corner of the flag, arose to her feet, and said, simply, though not humbly, “I will go.”

Ten minutes later she had been swung over the steamer’s rail, and a sailor, with a breaker of water and a basket of assorted food, was lowered in the chair. A hawser was then dropped to us, which we took in through the hawse-pipe, and one bell was rung in the engine-room.

“Say,” called the captain, as the steamer forged ahead, “what colours did you signal with? I couldn’t make ’em out.”

Hesitating for a moment, I answered: “Flags of all nations.”

But I doubt that he understood, though a peculiar buzzing sound, as of collective laughter, arose from the group of passengers nearest to Miss Durand.

Next morning, at Boston, I handed my yacht over to a caretaker, and telegraphed my sailing-master to come on with the crew and sails. On inquiry, I learned that Miss Durand had found friends on the steamer, who fitted her out and sent her home to her father.

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I met that breezy old man later on, and was prepared for anything from a broadside of abuse to a caning; but, to my amazement, he thanked me warmly for my chivalrous care of his daughter, and congratulated me on my skill in handling the yacht, particularly as regarded the rigging of the sea anchor; which chivalry and skill I did not dare disclaim.

I have also met Miss Durand—in society—charming, gracious as ever she had been—and actually received an apology and plea for forgiveness, which I cheerfully granted, as I had long since overcome my resentment, and measured the trouble by my discarded Theory—now reclaimed and firmly enthroned. And, as time went on, I found, by certain indications in her eyes and voice, that my former attentions might be welcome—that, in spite of the brutality of conduct she had forced me to, I had not lost ground in that trip, but, on the contrary, seemed to stand higher than ever in her estimation. Was it because she had reasoned out the injustice she had done me? Or was it because I had proved—animal-like in my strength and rage, yet thoroughly—that mine was the master nature, and she, queenly woman that she was, needed this proof before her love was pos-

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sible? I do not know. The question involves the inscrutability of the feminine heart—a problem that antedates human experience and is not yet reduced to law.

I have a wife now. She is timid and gentle, with the shiniest of golden hair and bluest of eyes. She likes yachting, is anxious to learn of the sea, and I teach her all that I know (she has just mastered the theory of sea anchors), while she studies deeply in nautical lore and fiction. But on one point—our nearest approach to a difference of opinion—we are not in complete accord: She enjoys the sea tales of W. Clark Russell, and says that they are just lovely—which is true—but, somehow, I can not abide them.





## A TALE OF A PIGTAIL

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ONE of the finest specimens of Chinese anatomy I had ever seen came down the rickety wharf, climbed my little schooner's rail, and, approaching the poop, where the mate and I sat smoking, asked me for a berth. He was nearly six feet tall, well built, handsome in a Chinese way, and he wore at full length down his back as long, thick, and glossy a queue as might be found in all Shanghai. Besides, he was well dressed, and smiled in a very well-bred, intelligent manner. He did not look like a waterman or a sailor; but as I was a man short I considered his application.

"What can do?" I asked in the pidgin-English of the seaports.

"Can do," he answered; "Ling Sum, name. Velly much able seaman."

"Can steer? Can splice rope? Can box compass?"

"Plenty good sailo'man. Makee long splice,

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sho' splice. Box compass. No', no' by eas', no' no' eas', no' eas' by no'——"

"That's good," I interrupted. "Savvy ropes?"

He put out his hand on the main-sheet and named it. Then he pointed to the foremast, jib-boom, and various parts of the vessel, calling their names correctly, and giving other evidence of nautical erudition far in advance of that of the rest of my crew.

"Try him on knots, cap'n," said the mate. "A square knot's the test o' Chinese sailorizin'."

Somehow, out of his experience, Mr. Jack Macdonald, my mate, had evolved the theory that a woman and a Chinaman can not tie a square knot, without laborious instruction—their instincts impelling them to make a granny's knot. A square knot is the simplest of knots. Bring the two ends of string or rope together, lay one over the other, wind it around underneath and bring it up; then bring the ends together again and repeat the operation, but reverse it—that is, if you laid the right-hand end over the other in the first knotting, lay the left-hand end over the right in the second. The result is a shipshape square or reef knot which a trained sailor would tie in his sleep; but if you do

## *A Tale of a Pigtail*

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not reverse the casting of the second knot, you have a slippery granny's knot. As I had been to much trouble in teaching my Chinese crew to knot reef-points correctly, and as I never had known a woman who could keep her shoestrings tied, I admitted the logic of Jack's contention, and put Ling Sum through the knots. He tied correctly a bowline knot, a becket and a carrick bend, a clove hitch, rolling hitch, timber hitch, and all the working knots used at sea except the last one named to him—Jack's test knot. Ling Sum quickly and smilingly tied a granny's knot.

"We can teach him that, Jack," I said to my scornful and triumphant mate. "He seems to be a good Chinaman.—Got any discharges?" I asked of the applicant. "Any paper talk?"

He pulled out a letter and gave it to me with the proud air of a good boy showing a favourable school report. It read thus:

"To whom it may concern. This scoundrel is no doubt the greatest liar and thief unbeheaded. He claims to be a sailor; if so, he is a Pei Ho pirate. He worked a week in the British legation, stole all that was portable, proved himself innocent, and was discharged on general principles and to save the

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legation. He asks for a character, and I cheerfully give it.

ROBERT WALPOLE,  
“Consul’s Clerk, Shanghai.”

Though I read this aloud to the mate, its long words and grammatical construction made it an unknown tongue to the Chinaman, who said, as I handed it back:

“Velly good man, Mis’ Walpo’. Velly good flien’ Ling Sum.”

“Yes,” I answered. “He says you’re a very good Chinaman. I suppose you are. You’re all alike. Go for your clothes. We go down to Wu Sung next tide.”

He went away and returned in an hour with his working clothes—one suit tied up in a handkerchief. I had no scruples in shipping him, for I already had five choice thieves in my fore-castle and did not balk at a sixth. But Ling Sum was *persona non grata* with the others at once. It was his own fault; he was far and away their mental and physical superior, and barring the matter of the granny’s knot, the best seaman of them all; but he chose to ignore this legitimate right to his own way among them, and to base his attitude on his orthodoxy. I heard suspicious sounds at sup-

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per time—squealings, chatterings and jarrings—arising from the forecastle hatch, but did not interfere, having learned that no one but a Chinaman can settle a Chinese row. However, on the way down the river that evening, I asked Yum Foo, who came aft to the wheel with a large lump on his forehead, as to the cause of the sounds.

“Him velly bad Chinaman,” he answered, as he took the wheel and the course. “Him Ling Sum velly good sailo’man—velly much fore side. Him no care this. Him talkee ’ligion all time. Got queue—velly much pleased. No care for Chinaman no got queue. Hittee him belayin’-pin. What manner fashion that?”

From which I gathered that Ling Sum had been reproving his shipmates for their apostasy from Chinese religion. Long acquaintance and contact with foreigners in the seaports, and possibly a former conversion to Christianity, had resulted in their losing their pigtails and growing hair like other human beings. Renegades they were, and in danger of assault in the inland towns. Ling Sum had merely upheld the ancient traditions of his race; but, as it was a matter affecting discipline, I called him aft and admonished him, flourishing

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a belaying-pin menacingly in his smiling face as I spoke.

But he denied all unworthy intent, and swore by the graves of his fathers—even though the rest of the crew came aft with bruises and contusions to refute him—that he was a well-meaning stranger among the wicked, that they had objected to his fine clothes, to his education, to his queue, and had reviled him, and his father and mother, and all his family, because of his ignorance of a certain mysterious knot which they had learned (it seems they had found his weakness); and for this he had given them kind words and forgiveness until forced to defend himself from their combined assault. As he could not show a bruise or a scratch to bear out his testimony, and as the chatter of protest was deafening, I chased them forward to settle it as they could.

There was no further trouble that night. We reached Wu Sung, at the junction of the Wu Sung river with the Yangtze Kiang, before dark, found a berth, and having set the anchor watches—a matter of form, for my crew invariably slept on watch—Jack and I turned in. Nothing moved at night in that narrow and crowded passage, and there was no danger from collision. As for thieves, though

## *A Tale of a Pigtail*

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we placed no confidence in the integrity of the crew, we did in loaded revolvers placed under our pillows, and in our well-established reputation along the river for willingness to use them on strange Chinamen. Besides, there was nothing stealable in the schooner of greater value than loose belaying-pins, pump brakes and buckets, except at such times as I received my freight money too late for banking; then I took it to bed with me and slept lightly.

This happened on the following day, after we had discharged cargo into a lighter. I received it in silver bullion and Mexican dollars, packed in a six by six square box of lacquer, the loose cover of which was held down by a silken cord, crossed and knotted as a grocer ties up a package. Sam Tung, as sinful-looking a thief as I ever saw, was the only one on deck when I came aboard at dark, and I could tell by the slight change in his seamy countenance that he had seen the box in my hand and knew of its contents.

"All right, my gentleman," I muttered as I walked aft. "It'll pay you to stick to your end of the schooner to-night."

Before turning in, I told Jack to stand by for a call, apprising him of the presence of the money

## *Shipmates*

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and its hiding-place—in my bunk. But, as usual, with my freight money aboard, I could not go to sleep, and twice that night I arose and sought the deck for a cooling smoke. My first visit was at a quarter past one, and Ah Wen, on watch from one o'clock to two forty, was dozing over the windlass bitt. I awakened him, not too gently, and learned that he had relieved Ling Sum, the new man, and would be followed by Sam Tung, the one who had observed the box. I hoped that Sam's Chinese instincts had prevented him from speaking of the box and arranging a combined raid on the cabin; and, though I would have felt easier if he had already stood his anchor watch, I knew that a Chinaman, aware that he is under suspicion, becomes not only useless, but at times dangerous; so I made no change in the watches. I turned in again, dozed until three, and again came on deck. Sam Tung was snoring on the forehatch, and judging him safest asleep, I went below, lighted the cabin lamp, shaded it from Jack's door, so as not to disturb him, and read for a while at the table. Then I fell asleep in the chair, and awakened shortly after in utter darkness.

Keyed up as I was that night, it did not take many seconds for me to realize where I was, that



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the cabin lamp ought to be burning, and that there was somebody in the cabin; a dark mass on the floor was slowly moving toward the forward passage.

“Turn out, Jack,” I called; “here’s a thief! Get your gun!”

I heard his answer as I sprang for the man on the floor, and as the fellow clenched me and we rolled about, I heard Jack yell: “Pistol’s gone, cap’n. Hold on, I’ll help you.”

“Get mine—under my pillow,” I called with difficulty, for though I was heavily built, my burglar was a wrestler, strong and lively. Jack bounded across the cabin to my room and then shouted: “Not here. Hold him till I get my knife out.”

“I’ve got him down,” I answered, my knee on the fellow’s chest and my fingers at his throat. “Give me your knife and light the lamp.”

I received the opened jack-knife, and while Jack fumbled for matches, pressed the point on my man’s throat, and said sharply: “Lie quiet, or I’ll drive it in.”

So far he had not spoken, but the touch of that cold, sharp steel brought out an ear-splitting shriek, and developed in him a strength that I was not prepared for. He gripped my hand in both of his

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and wrenched the knife away from me. With a violent wriggle sidewise, he managed to bring one foot up under my stomach; then I was lifted and hurled back against the table; and before I could recover, saw him scramble to his feet and dart out the forward passage. But in that sudden wrenching of the knife out of my hands I had felt it cut into his throat. It would identify him, I thought, and was comforted; for in the short struggle my hands had not reached the top of his head, which would have cleared or branded one, at least.

My first thought was of the box. It was in my bunk, tied up, but empty, as I ascertained by shaking it. In the passage, toward which the thief was crawling when I awakened, were our pistols, side by side. Having left the box in the bunk, no doubt, to delay discovery of the theft of its contents, it may have been his intention to replace the pistols for the same reason. But before we could speculate on this there arose from forward a screaming and yelling in pidgin-English, which brought us, pistols in hand, to the forward door. Our crew, the whole six, were coming aft—Ling Sum and Sam Tung in the van—and each held his hand to his throat and chattered frantically.

“Stand where you are,” I ordered as I levelled

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my pistol, and they halted in the glare of light from the open door. "Now, what's the matter?"

They all showed me their throats, in each of which was a small wound, and out of the babel of explanation and protest which arose, I gathered that they had been stabbed in their sleep by some one, who had then escaped from the forecabin in the darkness; that Sam Tung, on anchor watch, standing erect on the forehatch, looking ahead, was the first to suffer; and, having received his wound from some one who approached from behind, he had only time to observe a dark figure darting down the forecabin hatch. Which I mentally stigmatized as a lie; for if Sam Tung was the thief he had received his cut in the cabin, and if he was innocent, and awake on the hatch, he would have heard the uproar aft and would have been looking that way.

"Come down below, all of you," I said, and we mustered around the cabin table. I examined the cuts, found that none was serious, and told them so. Then we searched them, but found nothing of value—not even Jack's knife. Their clothing, in which they slept, like all sailors, was so soiled that none gave signs of additional stains from the dust of the cabin floor, and their faces

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all wore a common expression of injury and wonder.

“Now, look here,” I said sternly, “one bad Chinaman here. Come aft, turn out lamp, takee two pistol from bunks—put down on floor; takee box from bunk, takee money from box, put box back in bunk all tied up allee same; go for get pistols to puttee back in bunk, wakee me up; I fight, I make little cut in throat; bad Chinaman run away with knife; cuttee Sam Tung, go down, cuttee one, two, three, four—allee same place—allee so make all same—so no one can tell which bad Chinaman. Chinamen all stay here—in morning all go jail, all six Chinamen.”

Mighty vociferation arose from the six, which I silenced with the levelled revolver. Then they scanned each other's faces, and I watched closely for a telltale expression, but not a face betrayed its owner. At last Jack approached and whispered in my ear: “Was the box tied up? One of 'em ties granny's knots.”

I bounded into my room and examined the knot in the silken cord. There it was—a lubberly granny, which no sailor should tie. Securing a pair of handcuffs, I nodded to Jack through the door, and he immediately covered Ling Sum with

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his gun. Then I ironed the gentleman, in spite of his declarations of innocence, and, re-entering my room, brought out the box, held it in the lamp-light, and silently pointed to the knot. They crowded around, peered at it, and then arose the mightiest outburst of Chinese billingsgate that I had ever heard. They surrounded the captive, and in their native tongue told him their opinion of him. We knew what it was by the unmistakable scorn, derision, contempt, and anger in their voices, by the vicious slaps they gave his face, and the vicious tugs they gave his beautiful pigtail; and Sam Tung, as became the betrayed, was the noisiest; Ling shook his manacled hands and wagged his head in protest; but they brought the box under his nose, pointed out the disgraceful hitch, and renewed their upbraidings. The face of Ling Sum changed as he realized what had convicted him, and he hung his head dejectedly until the last Chinese anathema had rung out and quivered into silence; then he looked reproachfully at me and said:

“Ling Sum tie knots chop-chop velly good—no tie number one knot all samee Melican. No see—no can see, how can do. No tell Ling Sum—how can tie knot.”

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"Why, you bloody-minded thief!" I rejoined hotly, while Jack roared with laughter, "do you blame me for this? Think I ought to have taught you that knot, eh? and then you wouldn't have got caught. You've a wonderful nerve."

"If no can see, no can do."

"Where's the money?"

"Ling Sum no hab got."

"Ling Sum goes to jail chop-chop. Chop-chop: Ling Sum no got head." I drew my hand across my throat suggestively; but I doubt that it was the reference to losing his head that affected him; for he must have known that he was in no danger of his life for robbing a foreigner. But I think he was wanted in jail for some greater crime, and that he feared an investigation into his history, for when I added, "Ling Sum tell where money is, Ling Sum no go to jail," he looked at me quickly and said:

"Ling Sum step on bundle 'longside main hatch. No can tell—plaps bundle got money."

"Go out and get it, Jack," I said joyfully. Jack went out and returned with the ship's ditty-bag, which had once held the twine, palms and needles, wax, eyelets and the odds-and-ends used in sailmaking; but it now held my silver, and at its

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mouth was a long piece of spun-yarn, convenient to fasten the bag to the neck while swimming ashore, and this spun-yarn was knotted granny-fashion.

It was daylight now, and sounds were arising from the wharves. Turning to the five expectant Chinamen so curiously cleared of suspicion, I said: "Yum Foo, Wang Sing, Ah Wen, Wing Lung, Sam Tung—all good Chinamen—no steal, no lie"—each thief of the five nodded his head in smiling affirmation of this lie—"Ling Sum very bad Chinaman; steal, lie, cut throat—some time go to jail. But I tell him he not go now. Savvy? Still, Ling Sum must get punish. Chinaman punish. Savvy?"

I handed the key of the handcuffs to Sam Tung, and motioned them to the door. They went, leading Ling Sum, and Jack and I cooked our breakfast.

As we took in cargo that day I learned that they had Ling Sum still ironed, secured to the pawl-post in the forecastle, and on questioning one of them, was answered by mysterious mutterings about Shanghai; so, supposing that Ling Sum was to receive a good "basting" with bamboos up the river, I dismissed him from my mind.

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At Shanghai we discharged, took in cargo for Chapu, in Hangchau Bay, and sailed down the river. As we passed the last wharf of the American quarter, my crew—all but Ah Wen, who had the wheel and seemed intensely excited—went below. Then there arose such an agonized wail as only an afflicted Chinaman can emit, and up the forecastle hatch came Ling Sum, minus his queue, and grasping wildly at the short stump left. With eyes blazing, and scream after scream coming from his throat, he raced aft, then forward, aft again, and with a wild whoop went overboard. When he appeared on the surface, he struck out for the right bank, yelling occasionally, and as he made good progress, I forebore attempting a rescue.

His queue will grow in time; but until it does he is a creature far below the animals—as low, and as vile, and as worthy of death as the wickedest foreign devil.



## THE MAN AT THE WHEEL

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HE and I were the only Americans in the fore-castle; but he had been shanghaied, while I had shipped willingly. Yet though he had come aboard drunk as the drunkest, he was the one man forward who had escaped friction with the mates while they were taking our measures on the first day out. This immunity was not due to his nationality, for I, sober from the start, had suffered woefully—a black eye from the first mate, a sore head from the second, and unkind words from the skipper being my share of the criticism.

But Fuller was an able seaman in the highest degree. Even while still reeling from the drink within him, he displayed a knowledge of his work, a facility of anticipating happenings, and a readiness of judgment, speech, and action that was almost instinctive. He really gave the officers no possible excuse for fault-finding, and when he had sobered up, gave them reason for strong approval. Tall and straight, with broad, square shoulders and

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a phenomenal depth of chest—slow and deliberate in speech and manner until occasion arose, then quick as a panther—with a voice like a woman's in conversation, but vibrant and resonant as a chime whistle when calling down from aloft—with bronzed, refined features, heavy black mustache, and kindly eye hiding a latent sparkle—this man gave evidence of mental and physical power far above his needs as a sailor, and which suffered from but one drawback; he himself named it—intemperance.

He spoke but little in the watch below, and then, usually, as a peace-maker; for, until men become acquainted a ship's crew is an inharmonious muster. Once he became angry; Tim, a bristly-faced Liverpool Irishman, had persistently persecuted the ordinary seaman Hans, and on this occasion had planted his knuckles under Hans's ear for some small breach of forecastle etiquette. Fuller reached his long right arm out of an upper bunk, seized the Irishman by the collar and shook him until he gasped, then dropped him in a heap. Tim crawled into his bunk whispering and muttering curses, and Fuller sat up, his legs dangling over the bunk board.

“Now, I'll tell you fellows right here, once

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for all," he said, looking down on us, "you're going to let the Dutchman alone, or answer to me." No one spoke. He peered at us all, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and continued:

"Do I make myself plain? This is for all of you. With one exception there's not a whole sailorman among you." (I hoped he meant me.) "You don't know your work on deck; you get hammered by the mates, and come growling and whining round the beef-kid; then the biggest of you hit the smaller. Did you ever think that if the mates had less to bother them there'd be less billingsgate and belaying-pin soup? Why don't you learn your work? Compare notes; teach one another; talk about sailorizing, and get to be of some use on deck."

I ventured to suggest that the mates hammered us for the love of the sport, and that no amount of proficiency would save us.

"There's something in that, I know," he answered more mildly; "but in any case only the worst of you would catch it. Have you noticed that I haven't been struck, or called out of my name yet? Well, I promise you that I won't. I know my work better than the mates know theirs."

I was silent.

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“Another thing,” he continued—and his voice gathered strength. “I’ve listened to the talk in this forecastle about the skipper’s wife. Now, he’s a brute, of course—a whisky-soaked brute—but she’s a lady, and my countrywoman. Hear that? My countrywoman. If I hear her spoken of again in anything but terms of the highest respect I’ll send that man aft feet first for treatment. I’m an American.”

He rolled back, refilled his pipe and smoked silently. I also was an American—not long from a good home—and I own to a blush of shame that I had not protested at the forecastle discourse concerning the sweet-faced, big-eyed little woman who hovered near the after companionway and watched us as a kitten might a pack of dogs; but Fuller had anticipated me, and I could only announce bravely, “I stand by that.”

From this on, though he resumed his quiet gentleness of manner, he dominated the forecastle so thoroughly that there was no further need of dictation. Hans enjoyed immunity from assault and the captain’s wife from gossip; we took turns at cleaning the forecastle and attending to the food, and before the trades were reached were on fairly good terms.

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But before this another phase of Fuller's character was shown to us—he was an entertainer of exceptional ability. We were all impressed by his careful choice of words—we all knew that here was a man able to pass muster among refined people on shore; but not even I, fresh from the public schools, was prepared for the erudite discourse on history and science, poetry and art, which he gave us one watch, inspired by the grog which the skipper, with drunken generosity, had served out to all hands at the end of a hard reefing match. The liquor had warmed our stomachs and loosened our tongues, but did not conduce to sleep; and it began with Tim's comment on the "domfoolishness of a divvle he'd read about somewhere," who, having been cast away for years, returns to look into the window of his home and see his wife happy in another man's love and another man's children. The foolishness, according to Tim, was in going quietly away instead of inside, to "kick the liver an' lights out o' the other man."

"He wuz no man," concluded Tim, "to jist look in the windy and sneak. An' he wuz no sailor-man, ayether. If I had a wife—Holy Mother, me wid a wife!—but if I had a wife, I wudent lose her. Begob, no. But it's all made up; the felly jist

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wrote what wuz in his head. It never happened. It cudden't."

"Enoch Arden, wasn't it?" asked Fuller from above. "Yes, Tim, it could happen. Tennyson knew more of human nature than you do. It's a hard strain on a man, I admit, but it could happen. It has happened. I knew such a man."

"Ye did?"

"Yes, he was shipwrecked, just as the poem says, and came home years later. There was a man in his place, and a big new house built with money his father had left him and which the wife inherited, and there was a baby born. But he didn't look into the window and clear out. He talked with the woman and found out that the baby would be illegitimatized if he asserted himself; and though the woman loved him more than the new man, he knew that she loved the baby more than either, so rather than make trouble he quietly decamped without seeing the new man at all."

"And where'd he go?" asked Tim.

"To sea, of course."

It was a treat to hear Fuller talk, and I sounded him, leading from one subject to another until other voices were silent. Beginning with Tenny-

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son, he delivered a lecture on modern poets that would have enlightened a Bible class of editors; in fact, he talked us to sleep, for I, the last man awake, was listening to a dissection of Shelley when the words grew dreamy.

But this "feast of reason and flow of soul" had results detrimental to Fuller's theory of his immunity from abuse. The steward, a well-meaning but unwise individual, was in the habit of visiting the forecastle for a smoke with the men before turning in for the night, and arrived on this evening just in time to hear Fuller's discourse on poetry. So impressed was he by the wonder that he sounded Fuller's praises at the cabin table next morning, to the end that the captain, highly indignant at the discovery of such a forecastle lawyer among his men, forthwith made life a burden to Fuller, cursing and shouting at him whenever he came in sight. The captain was a well-built, handsome young man with a fair education and a reddening nose. Had he remained sober long enough to be guided by his natural sense, Fuller might have escaped his wrath; but he tippled continually and smelled vilely. Once his wife protested, and there were sorrow and shame in her blue eyes.

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“Please don’t, George,” she said to her husband. “He is doing his best.”

But he flung her a curse and pushed her aside; whereupon she went below, crying.

Another happening lowered Fuller’s stock still further. The two mates, “buckos” of the worst type, began shouting at one another in the darkness of a stormy night, each under the impression that the other was an angry and insolent sailor. They met soon on the slanting deck, and though they must have known their mistake by this time, still they went at it, to the intense amusement of all of us, wrestling, striking, and cursing until they rolled to the lee scuppers. It was Fuller who separated them; and he may or may not have earned the gratitude of Mr. Parker, the second mate—under dog in the fight—but he certainly aroused all the hatred that Mr. Oliver, the first officer, was able to feel. It was intensified by what Hans told him (we learned of Hans’s and the steward’s misdoing afterward). On fine nights he would call this slow-witted young man aft to be wheedled and pumped of forecastle news; and Hans, not able to quote correctly, gave out Fuller’s declaration in regard to his own ability in a way which made him say that he knew more than did



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the mates. So, though there was bad blood between the first and second mate, the former and the skipper were thoroughly in accord in their opinion of Fuller, and often joined their extensive vocabularies in expressing it. Sometimes, as I noted the sparkle in Fuller's dark eyes, I feared for the ending of this; but he held his temper wonderfully and silenced our sympathizing comment in the watch below.

We had now caught the northeast trade, and about this time my view point was changed from the forecastle to the lazaret. The cause of the transfer has nothing to do with this story, but is touched upon as explaining the somewhat unconventional frame of mind which makes this story possible. When you are flat on your back, with a second mate, bigger and stronger than yourself, kneeling on your chest, gripping your throat and hammering a belaying-pin *fortissimo* on your bare head until your tongue protrudes and your reeling brain sees things of another world, you are apt to fall back upon your instincts, and later to feel an unregenerate sympathy for mutiny, murder, and manslaughter, which you can acquire in no other way. I reached for my sheath-knife. Shortly afterward, dazed, breathing hard and unrepentant, I

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was ironed in the half-deck and entered in the official log for murderous assault on Mr. Parker, with good prospects of bread and water for the passage, and a long term in the penitentiary afterward. Mr. Oliver, our first mate, put the irons on my wrists, and as we descended the hatch, I noticed a sympathetic leer showing in his evil face; but whatever of approval this may have indicated he carefully left out of his language. Savage as I felt at the time, I remember philosophizing on the absurd nautical etiquette which required me to "Sir" and "Mr." this ignorant wretch, on whom I would not have wasted three minutes of conversation ashore. He was heavily built, bull-necked, and with a countenance that reminded you of a gorilla's. Quite different, though equally a villain, was Mr. Parker. He was younger, better educated, and better favoured—possessing a slippery, snaky kind of good looks, and an expression about the mouth which in repose was a sneer, when he was excited a malevolent grin, but when pleased or amused a very pleasant smile. My knife had barely pricked a rib, and he had smiled sweetly as I left the deck.

Having ironed me, the mate further secured me according to his not very brilliant lights. He

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rove a long rope through the links of the shackles, and bringing the ends even, passed a clove-hitch with both parts around a stanchion, then led the two ends forward out of my reach and hitched them to another; but he had left me six feet of rope between the first hitch and my shackles, and this was enough. After one night spent in the half-deck, breathing bilge-water fumes from the scupper-holes, I loosened the hitch with my six feet of slack when night came down again, crawled through it and forward to the other stanchion, cleared away the ends, then coiled up my tether and crept aft past the cabin-trunk to the lazaret, where there were soft oakum and canvas to lie upon, and a hatch above for ventilation. It was about four feet square, and in fine weather was left open. I made this change nightly, returning at daylight to hitch myself to the stanchion.

About a week after my incarceration, while crawling along the starboard alleyway, I heard a sound through the thin bulkhead which brought me to a stop—a sound of sobbing in a woman's voice, and harsh, masculine profanity. I knew that I was abreast of the captain's room, and I knew of rumours in the ship that he was unkind to his wife. When I could listen no longer, I passed

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on to my nest in the lazaret, cursing the drunken brute, and wishing fervently that the fates had made me a policeman instead of a sailor. Musing on the hard lot of the little woman, I fell asleep, to be awakened shortly by voices on deck.

The ship was close-hauled on the port tack, and out of the spanker over my head the wind hummed with a sound that would have deadened voices less forceful than those of Fuller and the mate. From where I lay I could just distinguish, faintly illumined by the binnacle light, the head and torso of Fuller at the wheel, and a few outlines of Mr. Oliver's burly figure, stamping back and forth across the deck in front of him. It was the blackest night I had ever known in trade-wind waters, and but for the binnacle light and their voices I would not have known them. The mate was speaking.

"I'll take the shine out o' you, you d——d sea preacher. Know yer work, do you? I've got a few tricks you don't know."

"What I said, Mr. Oliver," answered Fuller, firmly but respectfully, "was not boastingly, or in comparison with any one aft, but to induce the men to brace up and learn something."

"You lie, you d——d snivelling soul-saver.

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Don't gi' *me* any lip; don't you gi' *me* any lip, or I'll make you smell hell right here." He halted before Fuller and raised his fist.

"Hold on, sir," said Fuller. "There's precedent established, aside from the law in the matter, against striking a man at the wheel. I'll have the best of it, sir."

"You will, hey? D——n the law!" Then followed an epithet unprintable, and he struck Fuller in the face. He was bent back over the wheel-box by the force of the blow, but retained his hold on the spokes.

"There's little chance for a foremast hand in court; but, by God, I've got you foul, Mr. Oliver."

"Have, hey, you whining hound! Got any witnesses? Take another, you——!"

Again the epithet; again the big fist launched out, and again Fuller sank back over the wheel-box.

"Take care—take care! Don't hit me again," he said hoarsely as he straightened up. "You're right. There are no witnesses if I kill you. Take care, sir."

"Oh, hell!" The mate laughed contemptuously. Then—I did not see—it was too dark

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—I heard the sound of expectoration, and “that’s all you’re worth” from Mr. Oliver.

Fuller wiped his face with his bare wrist, and, with a harsh, throaty growl, dropped the wheel and sprang at the mate. They clinched, and as their tightly locked forms disappeared from my sight, I stepped toward the hatch for a peep over the combings. Before I could raise my head, however, a heavy figure launched over the hatch, and I heard a sound as of a breakfast egg struck by a knife-blade, then felt a vibration of the lazaret flooring, followed quickly by the quiver of the hatch combing and the floundering thud of arms, legs, and body falling on the deck. One of them had been hurled through the air, head first, at the lee-quarter bitt; but it was not Fuller, as I saw in a second. He was at the wheel, grinding it up, coughing and spitting, snarling and cursing furiously, and occasionally rubbing his cheek and chin with his wrist. The ship had come up into the wind, and I heard the long-drawn hail of the lookout on the forecastle deck: “All in the wind forward, sir.”

“All right—all right,” answered Fuller after a momentary inspection of what was on the deck over my head; and there was a raspy note in his

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voice—intentional, or coming of his rage—peculiarly like the unpleasant voice of the mate. It does no man good to spit in his face.

When the sails were full and the ship steady he left the wheel, stepped quickly down to leeward out of my sight, and returned in a moment to his steering. I could not see the expression of his face, but I saw him hold his hand to his forehead, as a man does with the headache, while he looked aloft at the royal, to windward and ahead, but he did not look at the thing on the deck.

“Dead,” I heard him say. “O God, haven’t I trouble enough? He deserved it; and they’d acquit him for my death, but hang me for his.”

Three bells—half past nine—struck on the cabin clock. He rang the strokes on the small bell behind him, and it was repeated forward. In half an hour he would be relieved.

He spent five minutes of inaction, while I watched, with a dry tongue and throat, every nerve strained in expectancy; then, putting the wheel up a full turn, he dropped it, sprang quickly down past the hatch, and I heard the scraping of boot heels on the deck as he lifted the body. I heard no splash—it was blowing too hard—but knew that he had given the mate the burial he had earned;

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and I knew, too, that if no one else had seen or heard, Fuller had saved himself; for I, a brother-slave in my country's ships, a convict-elect—who had felt the clutch of authority at my throat and seen things of another world—would not have denounced him.

He waited ten minutes—until the mate's body must have been a mile astern—then, putting his hands to his mouth, sent a bellowing call forward: "Man overboard! Man overboard! Call all hands! Come aft here, some o' you!"

There was confusion indescribable on that deck for a full half-hour. The captain came up drunk, as usual, totally unequal to the situation. The men were excited, and, judging by the few comments I heard in their voices, not overzealous to save their chief officer. The second mate alone was steady. Somehow he managed to back the main-yards and get a quarter-boat over; but it returned without Mr. Oliver.

I overheard Fuller explaining earnestly to the captain and second mate that Mr. Oliver had climbed the taffrail to examine the chafed clew-lashing of the spanker; that he had slipped, struck his head on the rail, and fallen overboard; whereupon he had immediately "sung out."



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With Mr. Parker in the mate's place and the captain—fairly sober now—standing watch, the ship ran down the northeast trade and into the doldrums, each day marked by the knocking down or clubbing of one or more of the crew. I knew this from the sounds I heard and from the gossip of Hans, who brought me my meals.

“I dink I will my knife stick in him, too,” he said one day. “Den I coom down here and do no work and be waited on, aindt it? Yah.” But when I pulled up my shirt and showed some blue spots left by Mr. Parker's boots—which little attention had followed a brazen and quite unnecessary request on my part for more slack to my tether—Hans departed, shaking his head sorrowfully. One part of Hans's gossip was gratifying: Fuller, in Mr. Parker's watch, now escaped a great deal of the captain's ill-will and abuse, and from Mr. Parker himself received consideration and even kindness. But the two were united in their tyranny over the rest of the crew, and treated the men harsher than before the disappearance of Mr. Oliver. I ascribed it to the fact that, with their force reduced by a third, they dared not abate one jot of their iron rule, fearing that the crew would take advantage of it; and that in Fuller's case Mr.

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Parker, more practical than the captain, knew that this man needed no coercion or terrorizing to keep him in order. Also, I considered the fight between the mates, when Fuller had aided him; but another conversation which I listened to one evening decided me that gratitude played no part in Mr. Parker's motive.

It was a fine night. Curiously enough for the latitude, we had a gentle, fair wind which promised to be steady. I had crawled aft cautiously, and on the way had listened to that harrowing sound through the bulkhead which told me that the skipper was drinking again. I stretched out on my resting-place just as four bells (ten o'clock) struck overhead. Fuller relieved the wheel, as I knew by the voice that repeated the course. Then I heard Mr. Parker's step and his voice.

"Why didn't you take the second mate's berth the old man offered you?" he asked; and as Fuller did not reply at once, I rose to my feet and approached the hatch. This promised to be interesting.

"I didn't want it, sir," he said at last. "I am not competent, and am satisfied in the forecastle."

"Possibly you are, Mr. Fuller—now that your pet friend is over the side. I say 'Mr.' Fuller,

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because I know a good man when I see him. Don't tell me you're not competent. I know better. You've walked the poop-deck for years."

Fuller did not reply.

"Now, I've been your friend—you can't deny that—and I want you aft here."

"May I ask why, sir? It's safe enough to disrate an officer, but not safe to promote a foremast hand against his will and make him responsible. He could dismast the ship, plead incompetency, and the owners would get no insurance. Why do you want me aft against my will?"

"Take the berth and I'll tell you. It's a good thing for us both."

"No, sir; I prefer staying forward."

The officer paced the deck a few turns and halted.

"I want you aft," he said, "because I like a man of your calibre. You're one man in a thousand. The other nine hundred and ninety-nine would have lost their heads the other night."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"What do I mean? Fuller, what I didn't see I heard from the forward companionway; what I didn't hear I saw from the corner of the house. I heard the mate d——ning you. I saw him flung

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across the deck, heard him land, saw you pitch him over, and heard you sing out. I give you credit for a cool head, but—I can hang you.”

Fuller made no response.

“I could have raised hell at the time, Fuller, but I approved of the thing; and, as I said, I liked you. Now, I want you with me. Take the berth.”

“Why?”

There was no “sir” added to the word, and Fuller’s voice was hoarse.

“Well—just this. May as well tell you. The skipper’s got clean green bills in his room to the tune of thirty thousand dollars—no right to it—what his wife got from her first husband’s estate. I wormed this out o’ the drunken fool. He sold out everything, and they mean to settle in Frisco. Now—do you want part o’ that money?”

“Shouldn’t wonder. Our right to it is as good as his.”

“Of course. Now we’re talking. I only want a third for my share, but I want the woman. You can have two-thirds.”

“What’s the plan?” asked Fuller, with a kind of dry laugh in his voice.

## *The Man at the Wheel*

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"Dead easy. Send him after the mate. We can take the ship to Frisco."

"And you want a third and the woman. Does she want you?"

"Oh, that won't matter long. She'll be glad o' the change. The fool cuffs her and cusses her too much. Of course a woman needs a bat in the nose once in a while, but where's the sense in spoiling good looks? She's a beauty if she'd stop blubbering. You leave that part to me. I'll win the woman all right."

"How?"

"Kiss her, hug her, tell her I love her. Oh, I know how. Her kid died lately, and she wants something to love. I'll give her the tommyrot women like. Dammit, I'd like to begin to-night; the skipper's dead drunk. Almost grabbed her the other night in the companionway."

Fuller waited a little before speaking; then his words came with a business-like distinctness.

"And in case I refuse to come aft as second mate, aid you in killing the skipper, take two-thirds of the money we find while you take one-third and the woman, you intend to denounce me for killing the mate?"

"Well—yes—that's about the size of it. I'll

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explain my delay by seeming frightened—afraid of a like fate. It'll go in court."

"I'll think a little. I don't want to hang. I've work to do in this world."

"All right. Think quick. I want your answer next trick at the wheel. Here, Fuller, it's a little late in the deal—but, have a drink. Some of the skipper's good stuff. Steward sneaked it for me."

He drew out a flask, but Fuller declined. "I've quit drinking forever," he said. "I've work to do."

The mate went forward and began pacing the half-deck, as I could tell by the sound of his footsteps. From my position near the quarter-bitt I could only see the upper part of Fuller's tall figure, standing at the wheel, holding his hand to his forehead as he had done before; but in the stillness of the tropic night I could hear plainly, not only the mate's footfalls, but Fuller's heavy breathing, the guttural snoring of the captain in his berth, and the sound of light footsteps on the forward companionway stairs—then voices in the lee alleyway. Fuller stepped to the lee side of the wheel, and holding it with one hand, bent his body nearly to a right angle as he looked forward.

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“What do you mean, sir?” came a plaintive and indignant voice. “Mr. Parker, I forbid you. What are you thinking of? Do you want me to speak to my husband?”

“Why, no, little woman; of course not. What’s the sense? He’d only hit you again. Just one; no one can see.”

There was a faint scuffle of feet on the deck, a stifled plaint that was half gasp, and a sound from Fuller’s lips that I had never heard outside of a menagerie. He left the wheel, and I raised my head through the hatch, but he had disappeared in the alley. Then I heard an oath—furious and all but inarticulate—a scream, a heavy stamping of feet, choking words of protest in the mate’s voice, the crashing of a heavy body on the deck, and the thud, thud, thud, of something hard striking it—the vibrations coming along the deck.

“Lay aft here the watch,” came a roar in Fuller’s vibrant voice. “Take the wheel, one hand. I’m through. One o’ you call the skipper.”

The shuffling of feet sounded on the deck as the men scampered aft, and I lowered my head, but remained where I could watch. Before the men reached the quarter Fuller appeared around the

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corner of the house supporting the nearly unconscious woman.

"Steady, little girl," he said tenderly. "Steady—don't faint. It's almost over."

"Oh, John," she wailed, "don't blame—don't blame me. I couldn't help it. I came up for air—the fumes stifled me—and I didn't know—I didn't know—and he struck me again to-night——"

"Never mind, Alice; I don't blame you," he said, giving the wheel a spin with his free hand. "I never blamed you. You've borne it nobly, and I hoped we could hold out, but—it ends this night if I kill him, too. Take the wheel here, one o' you," he added sternly to the group of men, "and call the skipper."

"What's the row?" asked Irish Tim, as he grasped the spokes. "Where's the mate, Fuller?"

Now came two or three men along the lee alley, and one answered Tim.

"Dead," he said. "Dead as he can be. My God, what a sight! Fuller, yer done for; ye've stamped his face off."

"Call the skipper."

A man descended the after companionway, and not knowing where to look, sang out loudly, wak-



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ing first the steward in the forward cabin, who appeared—later, the captain.

“What’s the matter here?” asked this individual thickly, as he reached the deck. “Where’s Mr. Parker?”

“Dead,” answered Fuller, still supporting the captain’s wife. “Dead for assaulting this woman. D——n you,” he yelled insanely, “can’t you care for the wife that was given you?”

“What—why—what—” stuttered the dazed captain, backing toward the companionway. “Assaulting my wife? Who—Alice?” he bawled, suddenly his faculties crystallizing to anger. “What’s this? Get away from that man. Get down below. Parker assaulted you? Then, by God, you gave him leave, you——”

“Be careful, you hound; be careful,” interrupted Fuller, placing the woman’s hands on the edge of the house and advancing, while the men drew back wonderingly. I had not scrupled to lift my head through the hatch, and had seen the well-meaning but unwise steward disappear down the stairs. He returned at this juncture and handed a bright revolver to the captain, who raised it unsteadily, scattering the men into the alleyways.

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"Lower that gun," said Fuller.

"Who are you—to talk to me like this aboard my ship? This is mutiny. Go forrard. Who are you, anyway?" Armed as he was, it was plain that he was frightened.

"I'm the Fool Killer. Lower that gun quickly. My neck's already in the halter."

The captain lowered the pistol. There was terrible menace in Fuller's even voice and deliberate advance.

"I've another name," he continued, as he stopped before the wavering captain. "Ever hear it?"

He bent forward and said something in a low voice—which I could not hear. Whatever it was, the effect on the captain was astonishing.

"Hell and damnation!" he shouted. "You alive—d——n you! By God, you die again—that's all." He levelled the pistol and fired, but his hand was unsteady, and the bullet went clear. Before he could cock the pistol again a scream rang out, and his wife threw herself on his breast.

"You shall not, George. You shall not kill him," she exclaimed, as she frantically clutched at the pistol. He struck her down with an oath, and was then busy with Fuller, who had seized his wrist

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and was twisting the pistol out of his hand. This was soon accomplished. I believe that Fuller was at that moment a maniac with a maniac's strength. He held the captain by the collar, at arm's length, until he had laid the pistol on the house; then with a few preliminary shakes and a sudden swing sideways, he jerked him off his feet. For a fraction of a second the captain was nearly horizontal, face upward, in mid-air. Then Fuller's right arm slipped under his back, his left hand left his collar, and his left elbow pressed into his throat. In this position, choking and spluttering, the captain was carried, like a doll in the arms of a child, behind the wheel-box, out of my sight. But in a moment I saw his legs, wide apart and bent at the knees, rise into view as he was launched feet first over the taffrail. A shriek began on his lips, but the water cut it short, and before this shriek sounded Fuller had regained the pistol.

"Forward with you all!" he roared as he vaulted to the top of the house. "Down off the poop, the lot of you. Muster at the main hatch and wait there. Steward," he called to the frightened flunkey in the companionway, "assist this lady down below, and then take the wheel."

But the poor creature had arisen and was al-

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ready stumbling down the stairs—perhaps to escape the pitiful appeals for help coming out of the sea astern—and the steward was soon at the wheel.

“Holy Mother!” said Tim as he relinquished it. “An’ will ye lave him drown, Fuller?”

“Silence,” thundered Fuller, levelling the pistol at him. “Go forward to the main hatch. Yes—if you want to know—and kill the first man that lays a hand on a boat gripe.”

Tim hurried after the others, who had lost no time in obeying Fuller’s command; and when the heart-rending cries from astern were hushed Fuller followed. I also followed, below decks, weak in the knees and dizzy, but feverish with curiosity to know what was to happen next. At the head of the booby-hatch steps I heard Fuller, at the break of the poop, order all hands called, and when their shuffling footsteps indicated their appearance, I listened to the address he made them.

“Men,” he said, in a steady voice, but with a ring and a snap to each word, “this ship needs a skipper and a mate—but we wont elect them. There’s not a man among you fit for it. So I appoint myself skipper, and the man in the half-deck

## *The Man at the Wheel*

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mate. I'll take the ship to Frisco and deliver her to a tug. Now, let me impress something on your minds. You heard me tell the skipper that my neck was in the halter. He chose to ignore that fact. It was my life or his, and I won. I killed the mate for insulting a lady—my countrywoman—and announced that reason; but I had another, which I announce to you, though I do not feel called upon to explain—it was my life 'gainst his. Do you understand? I have killed no one without reason; but, give me reason and I will kill you all cheerfully. Understand? If a man of you enters the cabin, or affronts the lady who lives in it by word or look, I'll drop that man in his tracks. Such little things as disobedience of orders, or lack of respect to myself or the man I appoint mate can be adjusted with a club, perhaps with fists. Against this you will have watch-and-watch, full and plenty of grub and water, and civil words while you do your work. Is this satisfactory, or is any one looking for trouble? I'm the Fool Killer, remember, and my neck's in the halter."

"It's all right, Fuller," began Tim, "we——"

"Hold on, there," thundered Fuller. "What did you say?"

"Captain Fuller, I mean, sorr. It's all right,

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sorr. I'm wid ye on this, an' I'll do as I'm told; an' it's a good man kin do that, sorr."

"It's all right, sir," "We'll stand by you, sir," "Served 'em right," "We'll back you up, sir," sang out others.

"Very well. Is the carpenter on deck?"

"Yes, sir," answered Chips.

"Take a file down the half-deck and file off those shackles. No time to look for the keys. Relieve the wheel, one of you."

At this I chose to descend and hug my stanchion. The excited carpenter did not notice that I was not properly hitched, and I was soon on deck, being introduced to my shipmates as their officer. It was my first promotion, but I was not unduly elated.

In the morning we gave the body of Mr. Parker sea burial, at which function I played the hypocrite and read the Lord's Prayer to the men—Fuller being below with a hysterical woman. It was three days before she could be left alone—three days before Fuller and myself got any sleep; for he dared not leave her, and I stood both watches.

There was no trouble with the men. Not once in the long passage around the Horn did Fuller need to raise his voice in anger or dictation, and

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the only violent language used to the men was on one occasion when I overheard Tim and Hans discussing the complaisance of our passenger in taking up so readily with the slayer of her husband. When Hans remarked that his "countrywomans did not do dot," I took official action—bumping their heads together hard, and reminding them of the Enoch Arden story Fuller had once told us under the warming influence of the grog. Having thus started a forecastle argument, I dropped the subject, satisfied that the crew would soon see through the grindstone—satisfied that Fuller would approve.

Though he had pleaded incompetency for the berth of second mate, he proved himself a master navigator, sneaking the ship around the Horn from "fifty to fifty" in two weeks, and as we sailed north in the Pacific, and the woman in his care recovered health and beauty and confidence, the latent sparkle in Fuller's eyes changed to the softest light that ever shone in the eyes of a friend.

At the Farallone Islands, twenty-five miles west of the Golden Gate, we made fast a tug's tow-line, and while some of us unbent the canvas, the rest, under Fuller, hoisted over the biggest and best boat we carried, fitting her with spar and

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lug-sail, ballasting her with two heavy trunks, and filling in with at least a month's supply of food and water. Then Fuller called us around him, thanked us and shook the hands of all, formally handed the ship over to me, and assisted the smiling little woman down the side ladder, following with a small hand-bag, which I do not doubt contained the "clean green bills" spoken of by Mr. Parker. We cast off the painter, the boat dropped astern, and Fuller hoisted the lug; then, as he pointed the boat's nose due west and crossed our wake, we gave him three cheers, which he answered with his hat, and the woman with her handkerchief.

We anchored the ship in San Francisco harbor. Then, after some stern and scandalized questioning by the authorities, we philosophically went to jail, held as witnesses, while revenue cutters and tugs searched the coast for a white ship's boat containing a man and woman. At the end of six months' detention the men were released, and I was tried, on my own admission and the evidence of the official log, for murderous assault on an officer, and given three months more; for a scapegoat was needed, and they never found Fuller. He had disappeared into the vastness of the Pacific Ocean; but not to die, that I know, as I know the man.



## *The Man at the Wheel*

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Good-bye, John Fuller, or whoever you be, and good luck to you, wherever you be. You were a good friend, a good shipmate, and a brave seaman and navigator; and you killed your enemies with the weapons you were born with, and reclaimed your wife like a man. But, under the law of your country, which denies to a sailor the right of self-defence, and which you knew too well to brave, you are a mutineer, a pirate, and a murderer. And this is the reason why I, who have gone down into the deep, dark valley and returned by the scratch of a sheath-knife, give this story to the world, fearing that they will catch you and hang you when I am not on hand to testify. Fare you well, Fuller.



## THE DAY OF THE DOG

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“LIGHT the glim—who’s got a match?”

“Vere is mine kist? I get some stick-plaster.”

“Keep yer dukes off thot bag; it’s mine.”

“It vas in my bunk.”

“Yer bunk, ye bloody Dutchman! Take an upper bunk—where ye belong.”

“Who’s got a match? I’m bleedin’ like a stuck pig.”

“That mate or me won’t finish the voyage ’f he kicks me again.”

“No oil in the blasted lamp! Go aft to the steward, one o’ ye, an’ get some oil.”

“Where’s that ordinary seaman? Go get some oil; find him in the galley.”

“There goes royal sheets—we’ll have a reefin’ match ’fore mornin’.”

“An’ I’d be a lot o’ use on a yard to-night; I can’t take a good breath.”

“I dink he stove in your ribs, Yim, ven he

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yump off de fo'castle on you. He loose mine teet'."

"He won't do it often. Wonder if sheath-knives 'll go in this ship?"

"In my last ship dey dake 'em away by der dock."

"Dry up—you an' yer last ship; it's the likes o' you that ruins American ships. What d'ye let go the t'gallant-sheet for?"

"I dink it vas der bowline. It vas der bowline-pin on."

"Where's that boy? Did he go for some oil?"

"Here he is. Got some oil?"

"Steward says to light up a slush-bucket to-night. He ain't got no oil to spare, but'll break some out in the mornin'."

"He be dam."

"The mate says to rout out the dead man an' send him aft."

"Where is he? Get an iron slush-bucket out o' the bosun's locker, an' ask Chips for some oakum—never mind, here's a bunch. Where's that feller? Can he move yet?"

"Here he is. Hey, matey, heave out. Gentleman aft on the poop wants to shake hands. Out o' that wi' you!"

## *The Day of the Dog*

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“That’ll do, that’ll do. Am I the corpse that is wanted?”

“Turn out!”

“I’ve listened to the conversation, but can understand nothing of it beyond the profanity. Can any one inform me in the darkness where I am? Am I at sea?”

“You are—at sea, one day out, in the hottest, bloodiest packet that floats. The mate wants you. Get out, or he’ll be here. Come on, now; we’ve had trouble enough this day.”

The flare of burning oakum in a bucket of grease illumined the forecastle and the disfigured faces of seven men who were clustered near a lower bunk. From this bunk scrambled a sad wreck. A well-built young man it was, with a shock of long, thick hair overhanging a clean-cut face, which the flickering light showed to be as bronzed by sun and wind as those of the sailors about him; but in this face were weary, bloodshot eyes, and tell-tale lines that should not have been there; a quarter-inch stubble of beard and mustache covered the lower part, and it was further embellished by the grime of the gutter. The raggedest rags that could carry the name of shirt, trousers, or coat clothed the body; sockless feet showed through holes in the

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shoes, and from the shoulders, under the coat, hung by a piece of cord an empty tomato can with brilliant label.

"Tramp, be the powers!" said one. "Isn't thot the name o' the bird, Jim?"

"Right you are, Dennis," said the one addressed—a tall, active American: he who had been called "Yim" by the sympathizing Swede with the "loosed" teeth.

"Yes," said the wreck, "tramp, that's my latest rôle. How'd I get here? I was in a saloon, drinking, but I don't remember any more. I might have been drugged. My head feels light."

"It'll be heavier with a few bumps on it," said Dennis. "Ye've been shanghaied 'long with three or four more of us. Gwan aft an' git bumped; we've had our share."

"What craft is this?"

"Ship Indiana o' New York. Ye'll know her better 'fore ye see the next pint o' beer."

"Indiana?" repeated the wreck. "And do you happen to know, any of you, who owns her?"

"Western Packet Line," said Jim; "J. L. Greenheart's the owner. Get out o' here; the mate wants to see you."

"Thank you; but I don't particularly care to

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see the mate. The captain will answer very well for me. Allow me to introduce myself—J. L. Greenheart, owner of this ship and employer of every man on board.”

Stricken as were those men with sore spots and aching bones, they burst into uproarious laughter at this flippant declaration, during which the ragged one moved toward the door and passed out.

“Lord help him,” said Jim, “if he goes aft with that bluff! The mates are horses, but the skipper’s a whole team.”

Ten minutes later the ragged one returned—feet first and unconscious—in the arms of two of the watch on deck, who bundled him into the bunk he had lately quitted and said to the inquiring men:

“We don’t know what happened. They had a lively muss on the poop, an’ the skipper an’ mates must ha’ jumped on him; then they called us aft to get him.”

The two passed out, and the seven men, with no time for sympathy or nursing, chose, with much bickering, the bunks they were to occupy for the passage at least, patched up their hurts with what appliances they possessed, and turned in. But they had no sooner stretched out than the rasp-

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ing voice of the second mate was heard at the door.

"Heye, in there!" he called. "Who's that dock rat ye've got with you?"

"Don't know, Mr. Barker," answered Jim from his bunk. "He didn't sign when we did—shanghaied in place of a good man, likely—but says he's the owner."

"Did he know the owner's name without being told?"

"No, sir—nor the name of the ship; we told him."

"Where is he?"

"In the forrard lower bunk, sir—this side."

The second officer stepped in—the still burning slush-bucket showing him to be a red-whiskered, red-eyed giant—and scanned closely the grimy features of this latest pupil in nautical etiquette. As though there was hypnotic power in the red eyes, the injured man opened his own and returned the stare, at the same time feeling with his fingers a discoloured swelling on his forehead that bore plainly the stamp of a boot-heel.

"An all-round hobo; get him out at eight bells, if he can move," said the officer as he left the forecastle.



## *The Day of the Dog*

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At four bells the helmsman was relieved, and reported to his mates in the watch on deck as follows:

“He marches up the poop steps an’ tells the mate suthin’ pretty sharp, an’ then, ’fore the mate could stop him, he was down below routin’ out the skipper. They had a run-in down there—I heard ’em plain—he was orderin’ the skipper to put back to New York an’ land him, an’ the skipper got a black eye out of it. Then the second mate turns out, an’ the first mate goes down, an’ between ’em all three they boosts him up the co’panionway an’ kicks him round the poop till he can’t wiggle.”

And when the lookout came down and told of his appearing on the forecastle deck shortly after the second mate’s visit and sitting for an hour on the port anchor, muttering to himself and answering no questions, the watch on deck unanimously agreed that he was demented. At eight bells he was in his bunk, and responded to the vigorous shaking he received by planting his feet in the stomach of Dennis, the shaker, and sending him gasping into the opposite bunk.

“Howly Mother,” groaned the sailor, when he could breathe. “Say, you scrapin’s o’ Newgate, try yer heels on some one ilse—the second mate,

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f'r inshtance. Me cuticle won't hold any more shpots."

Dennis had been disciplined the day before, mainly while prostrate.

"Kicking seems to be the vogue here," said the man as he rolled out, "and I've been a Princeton half-back, so I'm in it. I've been kicked out of the cabin and off the quarter-deck of my own ship—pounded into insensibility with boot heels. Why is this?"

"Now look-a here," said a sturdy, thoughtful-eyed Englishman—he who had vociferated for oil when the watch went below—"take my advice: turn to an' be civil, an' do as yer told. You can't run the after-end of her—ye've tried it; you can't run the fo'castle—there's too many against you. Stow that guff 'bout ownin' this ship or ye'll be killed. There ain't a Dutchman aboard but what's a better man than you, and every one of us has been hammered an' kicked till we didn't know our names. 'Cause why? 'Cause it's the rule in yer blasted Yankee ships to break in the crew with handspikes. You've caught it harder, 'cause ye didn't know better than to go aft lookin' for trouble. The sooner ye find yer place an' larn yer work, the better for you."

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"Thank you for the advice; I'll take it if I have to, but it's against my principles to work—especially under compulsion. My head aches, and I'm pretty hungry, otherwise I——"

"Turn out!" roared a voice at the door, the command being accompanied by choice epithet and profanity. "Bear a hand."

"Who is that?" asked the man of principles. "I've heard that voice."

"Second mate," whispered the Englishman; "don't go first," he added, mercifully, "nor last."

The first man to leave the forecastle was Lars, the Swede, who received a blow in the face that sent him reeling against the fife-rail. Then came Dennis; then Tom, the Englishman; followed by Ned, a burly German; Fred, the ordinary seaman; and David, a loose-jointed Highlander, who the day before had lost all his front teeth by the swinging blow of a heaver and had since, for obvious reasons, added no Scotch dialect to the forecastle discourse. All these escaped that big fist, the second blow, according to packet-ship ethics, being reserved for the last man out; and the last man out now was the man of rags.

But Mr. Barker had not time to deliver that blow. A dirty fist preceded its owner through

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the door, striking the mate between the eyes, and before the whirling points of light had ceased to dazzle his inner vision a second blow, crashing under his ear, sent him, big man that he was, nearly as far as Lars had gone. Recovering himself, with a furious oath he seized a belaying-pin from the fife-rail and sprang at his assailant. One futile blow only he dealt, and the pin was wrenched from his grasp and dropped to the deck; then with an iron-hard elbow pressing his throat, and a sinewy left arm bearing, fulcrum-like, on his backbone, he was bent over, gasping, struggling, and vainly striking, lifted from his feet, and hurled headlong to the forehatch.

“You are one of the three with whom I dealt in the cabin,” said a voice above him in the darkness; “now face me alone, curse you! Get up here and fight it out.”

“Mr. Pratt,” called the officer, rising unsteadily. “Mr. Pratt! Come forrard, sir.”

It was a black night, with a promise of dirty weather to come in the sky astern, and the ship was charging along under top-gallant sails before a half-gale of wind, against which no sounds from near the bow could easily reach the quarter-deck. Only at rare intervals did the full moon show

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through the dense storm clouds racing overhead, and Mr. Barker was alone on a dark deck, surrounded by fifteen men, not one of whom would have prayed for him. Dazed as he was, he knew his danger—knew that all these men needed was a leader, a master-spirit, to arouse them from the submissive apathy of the foremast hand to bloody retaliation. And a leader seemed to have appeared. Lars complained bitterly as he held his bleeding face. Angry mutterings came from the others; some drew sheath-knives, some abstracted belaying-pins from the rail; and a few, Tom among them, supplied themselves with capstan-bars from the rack at the break of the top-gallant forecastle.

“Mr. Pratt!” bawled the demoralized officer as he backed away from his challenger; then, as though suddenly remembering, he drew a revolver from his pocket and pointed it at the man confronting him. At that moment, a lithe, springy man bounded into the group from around the corner of the forward house. Flourishing an iron belaying-pin, he yelled:

“What’s the matter here? Lay aft, you hounds—lay aft! Aft with you all. Mr. Barker, you here?”

“Here you are, sir—this feller here.”

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A momentary appearance of the moon gave the newcomer light to see the levelled pistol and the man covered by it, who seemed to be hesitating and about to look around. One bound carried him close. Down crashed the iron pin on the man's head, and without a word or a groan he fell, limp and lifeless, to the edge of the hatch, and rolled to the deck. A menacing circle closed around the two officers. "Shame, shame!" cried the men. "He warn't in his right mind; he didn't know what he was doin'."

"It's bloody murder, that's what it is," shouted Tom in a fury of horror and rage. "Blast you, kill a man from behind who only wanted a fair fight!" He whirled his capstan-bar aloft, but held it poised, for he was looking into the barrel of the chief officer's pistol.

"Drop that handspike—drop it quick!" said Mr. Pratt. "Quick, or I'll shoot you dead."

Tom allowed the six-foot club to slip slowly through his fingers until it struck the deck; then he let it fall, saying sulkily: "Needs must when the devil drives; but it's only a matter of time, a matter of time. I'll have you hung."

"Put up your knives, every one of you. Put those belaying-pins back in their places, quick,"

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snapped the officer. The two pistols wandered around the group, and the men fell back and obeyed him.

“Now lay aft, every man jack of you.”

The incipient mutiny was quelled. They were driven aft before the pistols to the main hatch, where they surrendered their sheath-knives and received a clean-cut lecture on their moral defects from the first officer; then Tom was invited to insert his hands into a pair of shackles. He accepted the invitation (the pistols were still in evidence); and while he was being fastened to a stanchion in the half-deck the men at the wheel and lookout were relieved and the port watch dismissed.

Tom, with forecastle philosophy, congratulated himself on his present immunity from standing watch and stretched out for a nap, flat on his broad back, with arms elevated and hanging by the handcuffs above his head. He had nearly dozed off when the booby-hatch was opened and another prisoner was bundled down the steps, moaning piteously; and, as he was being ironed to the next stanchion, Tom recognised, by the light of the mate's lantern, the ragged violator of precedent.

“Blow me, matey, but yer hard to kill,” he

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said, when the mate had gone. "I thought you were done for. Know me? I'm the feller that advised ye to go slow."

"Oh, yes. What happened? Why are we here? What place is this?"

"'Tween decks. We were unkind to the mates—blast 'em—that's why we're here. I'd ha' knocked the first mate stiffer than he knocked you 'f it hadn't been for his gun."

"Was it the first mate who struck me? Oh, there'll be an accounting—my head! Oh, my head!" groaned the man. "I believe I'm injured for life."

"Ye were too reckless, old man; ye oughter ha' watched for the mate. He's a holy terror; he half killed all hands yesterday; that's why we couldn't stand by ye better. He jumped off the fo'castle on to Dennis, an' the two o' them kicked him all round the forehatch. David was knocked endwise with a heaver for goin' to windward o' the skipper, an' his teeth are all gone. Lars got soaked at the wheel—that's against the law, too; and ye see him get it again to-night. Dutch Ned let go the to'-gallant sheet, an' the second mate sent him twenty feet. I got it in the nose just 'fore goin' below at eight bells, for no reason on earth but



## *The Day of the Dog*

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'cause I was the only man left who hadn't got soaked—besides Fred, the boy; he got clear. An' the other watch got it just as bad. We're all used up an' no good at all; but you got it hardest, 'cause ye earned it. Blow me, but ye done the second mate up brown."

"But why is it necessary, and why do you submit to it—all you men at the mercy of three?"

"Pistols, matey, the pistols. An' Yankee mates are all trained buckoes—rather fight than eat. When the fists an' boots an' belayin'-pins an' handspikes can't do the business they pull their guns—we knew that. An' then, too, mutiny's a serious thing when yer hauled up 'fore the commissioner: all the law's mostly against the sailors."

"I have been drugged, kidnapped, and twice beaten insensible; there is law against that."

"If ye can get it; but ye can't."

"I'll try—I'll try; I've read a little law."

"Yer not a sailorman, matey, I can see; what's yer trade?"

"I have none."

"Never worked?"

"No."

"Jim says you fellers just hoof it round the country, sleepin' under haystacks summer-times an'

## *Shipmates*

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goin' to jail winters. It's better than goin' to sea. But ye talk like a man that's been educated once. What brought ye down to this—whisky?"

"Y-e-s, and knockout drops. My head is getting worse. I can't talk. How can I lie down? What fiends they are! My head—my head!"

Tom advised the suffering wretch how to dispose himself, and again considered the question of sleep. But no sleep came to him that night. The injured man began muttering to himself; and this muttering, at times intelligible, at others not, often rising to a shriek of pain, lasted until morning and kept him awake. In spite of his life of hard knocks, Tom had so far learned nothing of the alternate delirium and lucidity consequent on slight brain concussion, and supposed this to be the raving of insanity. Kind-hearted as he was, the ceaseless jargon grated on his nerves. He listened to it and the sounds of shortening sail overhead, and wished himself on deck, in the wet and cold, away from this suffering, beyond his power to understand or relieve. At daylight, nearly at the shrieking point himself, he welcomed the throwing back of the scuttle and the appearance of the first mate, who, in yellow sou'-wester and long oilskin coat, descended the ladder and stepped to the side of his

## *The Day of the Dog*

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victim. Mr. Pratt was a young man, well put together, with black hair and whiskers, and dull gray eyes set in a putty-coloured face. It was a face that might grin, but never could smile; yet it wore, as it bent over the moaning, tossing bundle of rags and blood, an expression of mental disquiet.

“How long’s he been like this?” he suddenly demanded of Tom.

“Ever since he come down, sir. If you please, sir, I’d like to be put somewhere else or turn to. I wasn’t myself last night, Mr. Pratt. I’ll be crazy as he is if I stay here with him.”

In answer to this Tom received two or three kicks in the ribs; then the officer went on deck, returning in a few moments with the captain of the ship—a man who in the rôle of jolly sea-dog might play a part well borne out by his physique. He was the very opposite in appearance to his chief mate—short, broad, and smooth-faced, with an upturn to the corners of his mouth, and twinkling blue eyes, which, in spite of a dark circle around one of them, gave his countenance a deceptive look of suppressed merriment.

“So, ho, my man,” he said, breezily, “so you nearly kill my second officer, do you?”

## *Shipmates*

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"Not this fellow, Captain Millen," said the mate; "not him, the other. This man raised a handspike over me and threatened to hang me."

"I was excited, cappen," said Tom. "I thought Mr. Pratt had killed the man, which he didn't."

"Will you promise to turn to and do your work, and obey orders civilly, if I let you out?"

"Yes, sir."

"Unlock him, Mr. Pratt."

Tom was released. Rising to his feet, he said, respectfully: "Will I go on deck, sir?"

"Go on," answered the captain.

But Tom was not to escape so easily. As he passed them Captain Millen's sledge-like fist shot out, and he fell in a heap.

"On deck with you," thundered the captain, whose eyes had not ceased to twinkle during the performance. Tom rose again, sneaked up the ladder and passed forward, where he showed his shipmates an eye that in ten minutes was blacker than the captain's.

Captain Millen and Mr. Pratt stooped over and examined the remaining prisoner, now unconscious and breathing heavily, and the mate asked, uneasily: "Think I've done for him, sir?"

## *The Day of the Dog*

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“Can’t tell; he’s all blood and the cut’s hidden, and I wouldn’t touch him with a fish-pole. I never shipped this hoodlum; the runners kept back a man and sent him.”

“The Englishman says he’s crazy—the men forrard, too; might be, or his yarn about owning the ship’s just the bluff of a tramp.”

“Possibly he’s daft; but he didn’t know the ship’s name or the owner’s name till the men told him, so Mr. Barker says; and when I told him in the cabin that the owner was a gray-headed man, it threw him out. Guess it’s only a bluff. Have you logged him?”

“Yes, sir. Wrote him down just after I ironed him.”

“I’ll put him in the official log as a maniac; evidence enough even without the men’s testimony—forces himself into my cabin and claims to own the ship, and orders me to run back to New York and land him; unprovoked assault on an officer, and display of maniacal strength. You see, Mr. Pratt, if he dies it’ll look better for us, and particularly you, to have him crazy; extra severity is necessary and excusable in dealing with dangerous lunatics. But we don’t want him to die—we’re too short-handed.”

## *Shipmates*

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“ Shall I have the steward down to fix him up, sir? ”

“ Yes, and tell him to get what he wants from the medicine chest; and better be more careful, Mr. Pratt; it don't pay to get the law after you. I know it was dark and Mr. Barker was badly scared; but, just the same, a light whack will always answer. Never strike a man near the temple, especially with an iron belaying-pin or a hand-spike; and when you have him down, kick him on the legs or above the short ribs. It's altogether unnecessary to disable a man, and unwise with a short crew. Be more careful, Mr. Pratt.”

“ Yes, sir,” said the pupil humbly; “ but they had their knives out, and I had no time to pick spots; I just let go.”

They left the half-deck, and the steward, busy with the cabin breakfast, was ordered to desist and attend to the wants of the prisoner, which repugnant duty he performed perfunctorily, yet with the result of bringing him to consciousness and inducing him to eat. This, his first meal since he had come aboard, was followed by a refreshing sleep, with his bandaged head pillowed on a coil of new rope; and when he wakened in the afternoon

## *The Day of the Dog*

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he was able, with his shackles removed to his ankles, to minister to his own hurts.

His condition improved steadily; but a week passed before his nerves and faculties were sufficiently under control to warrant him in, as he expressed it, "taking another fall out o' them." He sent a request for an interview to the captain, who granted it.

"Well, what d'ye want?" he roared, before he was half-way down the ladder.

"Want to talk to you," answered the unconquered wreck, in nearly as loud a tone.

"Y' do, hey? Well, talk civil, and be quick about it."

"Exactly. I am anxious to impress upon your mind, as quickly as your mind will receive the impression, the fact that you have made a serious mistake—that you have maltreated and confined in irons, on board one of his own ships, John L. Greenheart, your employer. You have not met him before, because you have only dealt with James L. Greenheart, his uncle and manager."

"Oh, you've struck a new lay, have you—invented a nephew to carry out your bluff? Well, it don't go." But there was a look of intelligent earnestness in the weary eyes of the claimant that

## *Shipmates*

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induced Captain Millen to continue in defence of his denial—a needless waste of words, had he stopped to think.

“I’ve sailed in this employ twenty-five years,” he stormed; “and I know, if I know anything, that there are no vagabonds in the Greenheart family. Why, you infernal jail-bird, your dirty hide is as tanned as a shell-back’s from tramping the highways.”

“Just back from a yachting cruise in southern waters, captain—I haven’t yet learned your name.”

“Rats! And when did you shave last? What kind of clothes do ship-owners wear?”

“I was slumming disguised as a tramp when I was drugged and kidnapped. As for being unshaved, I was in the middle of a champagne spree—or I shouldn’t have gone slumming at all—and scissored off my beard to heighten the disguise.”

Captain Millen did not know what “slumming” meant, and did not care to ask, so he listened no further. The interview ended with a hearty round of profane abuse from him, and the aphorism, “Every dog has his day,” from the other.

A few days later he sent a second request to



## *The Day of the Dog*

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the quarter-deck for a talk with the captain, but the favour was not granted. Fred, the messenger, who now brought his meals from the fore-castle, repeated the errand on the following day, was kicked off the quarter-deck, and refused to go again; so it was another week before he was able to communicate. Then Mr. Barker, rummaging the half-deck in the line of duty, listened to a proposition that he be allowed to work with the crew on terms of abdication and submission. This brought the captain.

"My health is suffering from this confinement," he said. "I can not eat the swill you feed to me without the appetite coming from exercise in the open air. I am willing to work as a common sailor; and as you will not recognise the name I give you, I will answer to any."

"Will you shut up about that owner racket?"

"I will."

"And do as you're told, and try to learn your work, so that you can be worth your grub?"

"Yes."

"'Yes'? Say 'Yes, sir,' when you speak to me or the officers. Learn that first."

"Yes, sir."

"All right; and mind you, any monkey work'll

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get you into more trouble. You're on the articles as Hans Johanne Von Dagerman, Dutchman, able seaman, fourteen dollars a month, and a month's advance—remember that when you're paid off. And you're down in my official log as a dangerous lunatic. If you raise any row aboard my ship, you'll be shot, and your character and record will excuse it. Understand?"

"I do. I accept the warning, the name, the nationality, and the conditions—even the lunacy. Only, captain, as I am officially insane, I can not be punished if I kill you all three—remember that." The weary eyes were sparkling.

"Oh, that's your game, is it? Want to get out to kill somebody? Down you go in my log as threatening my life and the lives of my officers, and here you stay in double-irons on bread and water."

So he was logged again, and another pair of manacles fastened to his wrists, with a foot of chain connecting the centre links to the stanchion. This gave him scope to lift from the deck to his mouth the one biscuit allowed him each day, and to drink from his tomato can, which had been saved for him. But it was not the diet that broke him down. The water was good; and the biscuit, though not the soft, fluffy morsel eaten at tea-tables on shore,

## *The Day of the Dog*

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was the cleanest and sweetest food on the fore-castle *menu*, and one a day was as much as he could masticate during his waking hours. It was the confinement and double-irons. After three weeks, pale and emaciated, he sent up another plea for liberty, in which he relinquished the privileges of the insane; and to Captain Millen, when he appeared, he promised a line of good behaviour while on board which debarred him the right to return a blow. He made this promise on his honour, which he said was all they had left him. As the ship was short-handed, the captain accepted the promise and his services. Then, with his tomato can in his hand, able seaman Hans Johanne Von Dagerman, as we must now know him, went forward, a member of the star-board watch. At the end of the first day he had proved his incapacity and was disrated to ordinary seaman, at eleven dollars a month. This did not trouble him, until, having heard of the "slop-chest"—the store of clothing which captains lay in to sell to sailors at sea—he learned that he could not purchase until out of debt to the ship. His pay had stopped when he became a prisoner, and the time required to work off the fourteen dollars advance charged against him brought the ship, bound to Shanghai, well into the chilly weather to the

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south of Cape of Good Hope before he could draw from the slop-chest; and then he bought, not clothing, but salt-water soap, with which he washed his own and the scant supply of rags contributed by his pitying shipmates, and took a chilly bath over the bows with a draw-bucket. He was certainly insane, and the men not only pitied him but feared him, forbearing all the petty persecutions which able seamen may inflict on a green hand in the watch below. He occasionally borrowed his friend Tom's scissors and looking-glass and kept his growing beard trimmed to a point—an outlandish, lubberly style, inspired, no doubt, by his lunacy. He manufactured, from the inner bristles of a condemned paint-brush, a fairly serviceable tooth-brush, with which, and a piece of bath-brick coaxed from the cook, he scoured his teeth—remarkably white and well-set—after each meal. Every morning, no matter what the weather, he took his douche-bath, using up valuable time in his watch below for the performance. When he had earned more money, he bought clothing, and paid his debts to his mates in kind—new shirts, etc., for old; and then only did he buy for himself. He refused to talk of his past, but frankly confessed to the others that he was crazy. All these idiosyncrasies counted against

## *The Day of the Dog*

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him, and drifting aft, through the medium of the cook and steward, were entered in the official log as additional evidence of his mental derangement.

He seemed to know something of sailors' work when he began—that is, he knew starboard from port, and the names of the sails, but not the ropes; and he could steer well enough to take his trick in fine weather. He learned rapidly, tutored by Tom and Jim; and, though often making mistakes that brought him abuse and sometimes knockdowns, he never resented, only showing, by the sombre sparkling of his weary eyes, that he appreciated and remembered. The big second mate, however, though prolific in profanely worded expressions of disapproval, avoided personal contact with him, candidly admitting to Mr. Pratt that once was enough for one lifetime and that he took no stock in the promises of crazy men.

At Shanghai, Hans Johanne Von Dagerman applied for liberty to go ashore, which was denied him; for he had drawn his wages up to date in slop-clothing, and with nothing to hold him to the ship, he might desert. As a consequence, he slipped overboard in the night, swam ashore, hid until morning, and entered the office of the American consul just as Captain Millen had finished reading

## *Shipmates*

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to that gentleman from the official log an account of his misdoing. The consul listened to the deserter's story, and was so impressed with its untruthfulness and so incensed by his violent demands that he depose Captain Millen from command, that he ordered him back to the ship in irons. He remained in the half-deck until the ship sailed for New York, and was then glad to be released on a second promise of good conduct.

On the homeward passage he kept his place and his promise, becoming, under the influence of his watch-mates, who began to like him, a fairly proficient sailorman—quick and intelligent in judgment, active and strong in the execution of orders. The ozone of the sea, with his hygienic personal habits, religiously clung to, had cleared the blood-shot eye, smoothed the premature lines in his sun-burned face, and transformed him from the dilapidated wreck of humanity first introduced to as healthy and manly-looking a sailor as ever pulled a rope.

The ship reached New York, and Captain Millen, according to instructions brought to him at Quarantine, anchored the *Indiana* off Staten Island pending the vacating of her dock by another ship. As this would not be for a fortnight, the men were

## *The Day of the Dog*

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sent ashore on a tug, and three days later paid off at the shipping-office. Then they disappeared from the ken and concern of Captain Millen and his officers, who, with the steward, remained by the ship, killing time as best they could. Smoking lazily under the quarter-deck awning one day, they became interested in a large steam yacht approaching on the starboard quarter. A dainty piece of cabinet-work she was, glistening with varnish paint and polished brass, with the American yacht ensign at the stern and the burgee of the New York Yacht Club at the fore-truck, yet showing, by her square stern and gaffs peaked from the deck, her probable English origin. Blue-shirted sailors dotted her white deck, two uniformed officers conned her from the bridge; and aft, on the fan-tail, seated in a wicker-work deck chair, was a white-haired old gentleman. Captain Millen, viewing her through his glasses, suddenly exclaimed:

“Why, it’s old Greenheart! Getting gay in his old age, buying steam yachts. Hope he won’t dock my pay to make up for this.”

As the beautiful craft drew up alongside and stopped, the old gentleman arose and took off his cap, which salute they answered; then a gig was lowered, manned by a neatly dressed crew, and

## *Shipmates*

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steered to the ship's gangway by a spruce young cockswain, who mounted the side and approached them. Touching his cap, he said:

"Mr. Greenheart would like to see Captain Millen, Mr. Pratt, and Mr. Barker on board the yacht."

"Well, well—certainly—yes, of course," said the captain. "Pratt, get a collar on; you, too, Barker. 'Tisn't every day we get into good society. Hurry up. Ready in a minute, young fellow." The cockswain descended to the gig, and the two mates to their rooms, where they made such hurried toilet as the urgency would admit of. As they came up, the captain said impressively:

"Don't let on, now, that you expect anything: the old man's finicky; but I think this means promotion for all of us. The new ship was launched last week, and I'm more than likely to get her. That'll leave a vacancy here, and I've spoken well of both of you. But don't let on."

They entered the gig and were pulled to the yacht, where, on climbing the gangway steps, they found the side manned for them. Two lines of men, marshalled by a keen-eyed second mate, who stared curiously at the visitors, stretched across the deck, forming a lane through which they must



## *The Day of the Dog*

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pass. And these two lines were composed of the port and starboard watches of the *Indiana*, spick and span, in clean blue uniform, each man gazing stonily over the shoulder of his *vis-à-vis*, and only one giving any sign of recognition. David, who had not smiled during the voyage, now grinned cheerfully around a set of false teeth. Agape with astonishment, the three visitors passed on until they were met by the smiling old gentleman, who shook hands with them and said:

“A little out of the ordinary, captain—no, not my yacht—my nephew’s. He has just returned from abroad, and thinks he was in the China seas about the time you were there. He wants to meet you and compare notes, and suggested a spin down the bay. John,” he called down the cabin stairs, “will you come up? Captain Millen is here. Allow me to introduce you. Gentlemen, my nephew, Mr. Greenheart. John, this is Captain Millen, our commodore——”

“Exactly.”

Hans Johanne Von Dagerman had come up the stairs and seated himself in the deck chair. His tar-stained hands were hidden in gloves; his symmetrical figure was clad in the New York Yacht Club uniform, and the weary eyes glittered in his

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bronzed face with an expression as deadly in its earnestness as was the gesture which brought two revolvers from his pockets and up to a line with the visitors' heads.

"Exactly," he repeated; "we've met before. Don't trouble yourself to introduce them, uncle—allow me. Allow me to make you acquainted with three as black-hearted, inhuman scoundrels as ever disgraced humanity."

"Why, John—John, what does this mean?" exclaimed the puzzled old gentleman, while Captain Millen, pale and embarrassed, stuttered:

"I didn't know, sir; why didn't you tell me?" Mr. Pratt and Mr. Barker said nothing, but looked from the levelled pistols forward to the two lines of observant men, and noticed that the yacht was under way and now heading for sea.

"Uncle, how long has Captain Millen commanded a ship for father?"

"Over twenty-five years, John; and he now stands first—as good, capable, and honest a captain as ever sailed a ship. I am astonished."

"Um-humph—I see. Yet I am afraid that if father knows now how his money was made—how every dollar was wrung from the sweat, and the blood, and the suffering of slaves—he is not resting

## *The Day of the Dog*

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easy in his grave. Uncle, you are getting old. In a week I shall expect a statement of the business of the line, with the names and whereabouts of the ships and the names of the captains. There is going to be one line of American sailing ships conducted on humane principles. But before you relinquish control, examine the official log of the *Indiana* for the last voyage, and you will learn that one Hans Johanne Von Dagerman is insane and not responsible for his actions. An official log is excellent testimony in court. Now, then, you three, off with your coats and throw them down the companionway—quickly, or I'll lift the tops of your heads."

He was still seated in the deck chair, but his voice rang out like the blare of a trumpet; and they obeyed him, while the old gentleman wrung his hands nervously.

"Turn your trousers pockets inside out," he commanded, and was obeyed again.

"Now, boys," he called excitedly, "they haven't any pistols, and we've got them right where we want them. Tom—Jim—Ned—hurrah! here; come on! Lars—drive in; there's a railful of brass belaying-pins; there's a rack of handspikes; David, remember your teeth. Come on, Fred! Come on,

## *Shipmates*

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the whole crowd of you! Let them know how it feels. Give it to them!"

An hour later, three men—scarred, bleeding, and groaning—stripped to remnants of underclothing, conscious of nothing but their terrible pain, were lowered into a boat and landed at the wharf of Bellevue Hospital, from which institution emanated, in a few days, certain official notifications to the police which resulted in certain official inquiries that were immediately hushed.

A few days later a shocked and agitated old gentleman betook himself to the mountains to be treated for nervous prostration, and in a few months a young clubman—former good fellow, lately returned from abroad—had excited much gossip and puzzled comment among his friends because of his serious demeanour, changed habits, and strict attention to business.

## AT THE END OF THE MAN-ROPE

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MR. ARBUCKLE's reputation was international, and from the view-point of shipmasters and owners it was good. Aside from slight mention of an independence of character which had prevented their recommending him for a command, captains with whom he had sailed spoke well of him. They agreed that he knew his business. He could "lick a crew into shape" before the green hands had learned the ropes. He could get more work out of them than could ordinarily be got out of double their number. He could take a lofty, skysail yarder—dingy and rusty from a long stay at the dock—and with the poorest of crews could have her spick and span as a yacht before reaching the Horn or the Cape. In a sudden squall he could shorten down to top-gallant sails before the watch below could reach the deck to help. In short, he was, as one skipper expressed it, "the two ends and the bight of a sailor," and, in the opinion of all of them, the best chief mate out of New York.

## Shipmates

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The opinion of sailors who had signed under him was equally unanimous, but, being unfit for publication, is not given here. It does not matter. Gossip of the forecastle and sailors' boarding house would not have influenced Captain Haskins at this stage of his development, even had he heard it. A secret and unsatisfied yearning for higher things, hidden in his soul since his first voyage with his father, would have risen up to offset such gossip.

At ship-chandlers' stores, agents' and consuls' offices, and at ship-masters' tables, he had listened to tales told by his *confrères* of mutinous crews, double-irons and bread and water, belaying-pin and handspike medicine, powder and buckshot arguments, and other details incident to the government of big ships; and he, the little, withered, kindly-faced old man, who had never struck a blow or received one, who did not need a mate to keep his men at work, whose ancient little vessel was known as the Sailors' Home, would have lived such experiences and told such tales. His humdrum life palled upon him. Hence his secret yearnings—hence his delight when, looking for a mate at Cal-lao, he was introduced by the consul to Mr. George Arbuckle, the crack chief officer of big ships, the

## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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dashing, handsome six-footer whose reputation was so good, who for twenty years had signed in nothing smaller than 2,000 tons register, and who would sign with Captain Haskins now only because shipwreck had left him penniless, and the consul having procured him a berth, declined further assistance.

"I'll take the berth, captain," he said, "and be aboard in the morning; but there's one thing I stick out for. There's no second mate, you say, so I'll have more than my share of the work. What I want is, no interference between me and the men. I'm not used to it, in the first place; and then, I'll have no time for it. I don't believe in coddling men, and if I break one o' their heads—that's my business. If I kill one o' them—that's my business too; but I'll expect my money at quarantine, as usual, and a chance to skip before we dock."

"Certainly, certainly," stammered the little captain. "I understand, Mr. Arbuckle. A mate has rights which a master is bound to respect. I leave things entirely to you—as far as the work goes. You know your business. I heard of you ten years ago. I have six in the forecastle. A little stirring up won't hurt 'em. Suit yourself. Stir 'em up, if you like."

## *Shipmates*

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So Mr. George Arbuckle became mate of the little brigantine *Warrior*, loaded and cleared for New York. On his way to the dock in the morning he stopped at the consulate to post a letter home, and listened to this from the white-haired old consul:

“I heard you speak carelessly of breaking heads and killing men. You have done this before—I have heard of you—and will possibly do it again; but, be assured, sir, on the word of an old man who has studied men and events, the wrong we do comes home to us this side of the grave, and the men we kill come back to watch us die. Here is a letter, just in from the Frisco steamer, for one of your crew.”

Mr. Arbuckle laughed at the admonition, shook hands with the consul, pocketed the letter, and went on board. When he had changed his clothes and reached the deck, he found that Captain Haskins had mustered the crew at the main-mast.

“These are my men, Mr. Arbuckle,” said the captain. “Men, this is Mr. Arbuckle, who goes home mate with us.”

A gray-bearded man, elderly but active, stepped forward from the group, and ducking his head with



## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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a conciliatory grin, said, partly to the captain, partly to the officer:

“I knew Mr. Arbuckle when he was a boy, sir, though I don’t s’pose he ’members me. I lived in Tompkinsville a while. He used to chum wi’ my nephew—my namesake. My name’s Martin Mathews, sir.”

Mr. Arbuckle made no immediate response. He was looking into each face with a dispassionate stare, and only gave the old sailor his share of the scrutiny. When he had finished the inspection he said quietly to the crew as a whole:

“I’ve taken your measure. Now, let me tell you at the start—I expect when I speak to a man that that man will jump—not walk, or run, but jump. Understand? Then we can get along. But, if he don’t—if I have to speak twice to a man—that man’ll wish himself dead. Understand? My name’s Arbuckle. Ever hear o’ me? My first name is Mister. Remember that.”

The men—all but the negro cook—shifted their feet uneasily and dropped their eyes when his searching glance met theirs. But the cook returned his stare.

“I think, sir,” said Martin, “you’ll find us

## *Shipmates*

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all right. I've sailed three v'yages wi' Captain Haskins."

"Two and a half too many. And right here, old man, let me say to you: I've no use for townies aboard ship. The less you have to say about Tompkinsville, the better for you. Go forrard, the lot of you."

They obeyed him, with misgiving in their faces, though Captain Haskins smiled his delight. Here was the right kind of a mate. But for a few days, during which the brigantine put to sea, nothing further occurred to further satisfy his yearnings or justify the misgivings of the men. Mr. Arbuckle proved his efficiency as an officer. In navigation he was superior to Captain Haskins, and in seamanship above the criticism of old Martin, an erudite forecastle lawyer. The men, too, impressed by his certain mastery of his profession, and zealous to please an officer they respected, forestalled the first beginnings of disapproval, until Tom, an intelligent young fellow, fresh from the navy, answered a command with "Very good, sir," instead of the "Ay, ay, sir" of the merchant marine. Obviously, no self-respecting officer could brook such an offence; so Tom was promptly knocked down, stepped upon, kicked in the face and instructed.

## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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"I want none o' your d——d man-o'-war etiquette here," said the mate sternly, as the dazed sailor arose. "Answer me properly, or I'll cut the liver out o' you. Hear me? Come now, what d'ye say?"

"Ay, ay, sir," stammered Tom, too astonished, as well as disabled, to resent this treatment. He was not cowardly, but no sane man merely *resents* the assaults of a tiger, and Tom possessed the man-of-war's man's respect for authority.

Jerry, an Irishman, was next to be disciplined. He spilled some tar on the dingy old deck, and was called down from aloft, collared, choked, pressed downward, and his nose rubbed in the sticky tar; then he was reduced to aches and contusions. But the national sense of injury was strong in Jerry, and he had never served in the navy. He turned on the officer and fought him until rendered unconscious; then he was carried to his bunk and nursed back to life by Captain Haskins, who read him a lecture on insubordination, and outwardly approved of his punishment. Outwardly, because the misgivings of the men had reached to the captain, and were sorely conflicting with his inward yearnings.

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Dutch Ned's turn came next. A shift of wind caught the jibs aback, and Ned, at the wheel, was blamed.

"I was put der wheel hard up, sir," he said in answer, "but she no steerage way have right away, sir."

"Dry up, you black-jowled Ethiopian," yelled the angry Mr. Arbuckle. "Talk back to me, will you?" Then—it was painful—Ned was taught his place; but when he had learned it, he could not see, and another man steered his trick. Captain Haskins was non-committal.

In the freezing weather off Cape Horn, John, a Swede, fell from the icy foretop-gallant yard, struck the upper topsail yard, bounded to the lower topsail yard, and held on. But he had dropped the heaver which he had taken aloft, and this fell perilously close to Mr. Arbuckle's head. Descending painfully, with broken ribs and bleeding face, his answers to Mr. Arbuckle at the rail were not such, in coherence and respectfulness of tone, as to convince the gentleman of John's innocence in dropping the heaver so close to him. So John was further crippled with the heaver, which the mate had secured. Captain Haskins did what he could for the sufferer, and then reasoned with the mate.

## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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His crew was small, he said, and it was unwise to have more than one man disabled at once. For, though Dutch Ned could now see, Jerry was unable to pull ropes or steer.

This advice might have prevailed, for Mr. Arbuckle possessed a fairly logical mind. But, unluckily, he communed with George, a weak-minded, lanky youth of the crew, whom he called aft to keep him company on a clear moonlight night. He asked the young man about his history, his plans, hopes, and prospects, and the flattered weakling responded. He was a member of the Salvation Army, he said—not a sailor; and he had signed with Captain Haskins at the behest of his superiors as a practical means of saving souls; for sailors ashore were hard to reach, and the army had few converts among them. But he had achieved little with this crew—the spirit of the Lord was not with them. They were irreverent, profane, and revengeful, in spite of his prayers and exhortations. And this led to the object of the interview.

“Revengeful?” repeated the mate. “What about? Are they after me?”

“Well, no, sir; not that. But they say spiteful things.”

“About me? What do they say? Tell me,

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boy. I've been your friend. I saw at the start that you were different from that crowd."

"It's not all of them, sir," said the fatuous youth. "But Martin says that you practically murdered your wife and child years ago. Oh, I don't believe it, sir. I don't, really." The mate's face was frightful in the moonlight.

"What—how—how did he put it?" he said in a choking voice.

"I don't believe it, Mr. Arbuckle. He said that you beat her cruelly when at home, and when you left on a voyage she took the child to New York and tried to make a living, but they both starved to death."

"Go forrard," said the mate calmly, "and send that old liar aft."

George disappeared and Martin came.

"I'll teach you, you old crow-bait," he said, "to set the men against me. Killed my wife and child, did I? Didn't I tell you that the less you knew about Tompkinsville the better for you?"

"Mr. Arbuckle," answered the old man, bravely, "what I've said in the fo'castle I'll say to your face; and I've a right to say what the whole town knows. I knew you as a boy, and I knew your wife as a pretty little girl, and if the account

## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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is true, you are responsible. I never saw the baby, but my folks did, and read the letter she sent just before they both died of starvation."

The old man fell under the fist blow which followed, and when the infuriated officer had finished stamping upon him, he, too, was carried to his bunk. And Captain Haskins became alarmed; his secret ideals had been realized.

"You stop this right here, Mr. Arbuckle," he said. "I forbid you killing and maiming my crew. If you strike another of my men, I'll put you 'fore the mast. I will, by the Eternal."

Which was as near as Captain Haskins ever came to profanity.

But the mate was not himself; he answered warmly—in fact, threatened to break Captain Haskins's head if he violated his agreement to not interfere between him and the men, and for a few days was practically master of the vessel—a terror to all. Then an incident brought him around.

The Salvationist, useless on deck, and spared by the mate only because of his value as a spy, was a splendid entertainer in the watch below, possessing a clear, bell-like tenor voice. Usually he sang the sacred words and jingling tunes of the Salvation

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Army, but on this evening he treated them to a pathetic song of the war days. It began softly at first, nothing distinguishable but the melody, then rising until the words of the refrain could be heard from the poop.

“No more the bugle calls the weary one.  
Rest, noble spirit, in thy grave unknown.  
I'll find you and know you among the good and true,  
When a robe of white is given for the faded coat of blue.”

Mr. Arbuckle was heard to utter a sound between a gasp and a groan; then he ran forward, entered the forecastle, pulled the singer from his bunk, and expressed himself:

“Shut up—shut up, you snivelling, caterwauling insect! Don't let me hear any more of this.” And he shook the unlucky George until his breathing was difficult.

“Don't you want us to sing in the last dog-watch below, sir?” asked Tom, standing up.

“No,” yelled the mate. Then, reminded by their faces that the edict was revolutionary, he added: “Not such songs as this. They're played out years ago. Sing something decent—lively. Hear me?” he said to the cowering George. “Sing something lively, if you want to sing; and don't sing so d——d loud.”



## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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"Yes, sir—all right, sir—ay, ay, sir," answered George, and the mate went aft.

He walked the deck until midnight, and for an hour into his watch below; then approached the captain.

"Mustn't think, sir," he said, halting, "that I'm trying to kill the men. I'm not; but they aggravate me. There's not an able seaman aboard."

"That is a matter of opinion, Mr. Arbuckle," answered the captain, coldly. "Even so, able seamen are not really necessary in a little craft like this. Human beings are—and require human treatment. And, what's wrong with that boy? He's got a good voice. I like to hear him sing; and he's the one man, besides the cook, that you haven't maltreated. I thought you liked him."

"Like him—the snivelling, psalm-singin' sneak? I've pumped him dry about the rest, and they put him up to sing that song. I know it. It's the old fellow. Have you heard what he's saying 'bout me?"

"About your wife and child? Yes. Martin told me when I bandaged him. That is not my business. But I shouldn't think a mere song could disturb you, Mr. Arbuckle. I know the song—

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Faded Coat of Blue. It'll draw tears from a stone, but not from bucko mates—as a general thing."

"But I've got feelings, captain, same as any man. And that's a song she taught the child—used to sing it together, the young un sittin' in her lap, and me smokin' and listenin'. 'Tisn't on her account. To h——l with her. She quit me when I was at sea. But she took the boy—my boy. She took my boy away, and he died."

"Of starvation?"

"No," and the mate's voice was hoarse. "I won't have it that way. She lied. D——n her, she lied. Starvation—my boy—not that. He got sick, maybe, and she didn't take care of him."

"Why did she quit you?" asked the captain, for lack of something to say.

"Why, captain, she was one of these high-toned pieces—too good for this world—parson's daughter; and when her old dad died she was d——d glad to marry me to get something to eat. But she objected to everything I did, and said I wasn't good enough for her—and when I gave her a few bats in the nose she objected still more. I had to take this—at school and at sea. So does every man. Why should a woman be exempt? But she quit me, d——n her, and took my boy."

## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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“Well,” said the captain, slowly, “if that is your code, we can not discuss it. You are too old to be changed. I’ll simply say, Mr. Arbuckle, that I am master here under the law. I forbid you to strike another man aboard my vessel. You are big enough to thrash all hands, but I know the law, and will prosecute you, with my men for witnesses.”

The mate went to his bunk. He may, or may not, have been impressed by the captain’s threat. He certainly was by an interview with the cook, which occurred a few mornings later. So far there had been no friction between these two, the most important factors in the economy of a ship at sea. But the watch on deck being a little dilatory in drinking their morning coffee, Mr. Arbuckle appeared at the galley door loudly commanding that the cook stop the morning coffee until further orders. The cook came to the door with a ten-inch carving knife. “Look heah,” he said, with sparkling eyes, “I know you—you no-count white man. My father used to go into the forest an’ kill gorillas like you ’fore the traders got him. I was a slave ’til I was big ’nough to run away. Then I killed an overseer like you. Now I’m an American. You heah me? I’m an American. I signed

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heah to cook for all hands an' give 'em coffee at turn-to. I'm goin' to do it. I sharpened this knife the day you joined, an' I've kep' it sharp. If you run foul o' me, I'll cut you into little bits. You heah me?"

The officer heard, and understood. He went aft for a revolver, and the cook followed to the cabin door with the knife, and met him when he appeared. But the pistol did not leave his pocket. The cook was as large a man as himself, and there was an earnest look in his sparkling eyes that dominated other influences. So the day's work began without disturbance.

From this on, though he carried his revolver ostentatiously for the cook's benefit, and cursed the men explosively night and day, he obeyed Captain Haskins's injunction, and until the last day of the passage he struck no man. But in the case of George, no longer exempt, the vocal abuse had the effect of reducing him to a state of chronic terror, which found expression in a willingness to betray to Mr. Arbuckle all that was said in the fore-castle, in the hope of finding favour with him. The mate would listen, of course, and abate none of his contempt for the informer, while the crew, easily surmising the object of the nightly discourse at the

## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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weather main rigging, made life a burden to him in the watch below. Never too wholesome in his attitude toward his fellow-men, George yielded to the pressure, and became an illogical, irresponsible animal; never too cleanly in his personal habits, he became on offence to the eye and nostril. And this induced the mate to apply heroic treatment. He dowsed him with buckets of water in the morning washing down of the deck, and this not availing, he collared him one dark night when he had crept aft with a new tale, marched him to the taffrail, and, in spite of his screams, tied him to the end of the main-sheet and lowered him over the stern, slacking away until the poor wretch was immersed to his waist.

Occasionally a lifting sea would bury him, smothering his cries; then, as the stern arose, he would dangle, dripping and gasping, from the upright rope until another sea came to overwhelm him. Mr. Arbuckle watched from the taffrail, and might have pulled him in after he was presumably cleaner; but a sudden squall and shift of wind required his attention and the work of the watch below for two hours, during which George remained overboard, forgotten by all but the man at the wheel. At last this man—it was Martin, barely

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recovered from his beating—informed Mr. Arbuckle that if he did not hoist George aboard he would becket the wheel and call the captain, which induced the officer to curse Martin luridly, but, as a secondary consideration, to rescue the involuntary bather.

George would not talk when he was pulled in. He smiled voluminously in the light from the binnacle and muttered incoherently, but would not *talk* in spite of the stern command of the mate to tell how he felt and to state his future intentions with regard to soap and water. They led him forward, where his horrified shipmates stripped and put him in his bunk to drivel himself into the sleep of utter exhaustion and idiocy. He awakened twelve hours later, and, though he still gibbered when spoken to—often repeating the words of the speaker—he showed no sign of brain, mind, or soul behind the words. They found that he could pull a rope if put in his hands, and would belay when told. He could not be trusted at the wheel, but learned to express himself on seeing a light, and became available on the lookout. If properly watched he could paint, tar down rigging, sweep and scrub the deck, but could do no work requiring the intelligence of a pack mule. Yet, in spite of the embargo

## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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on his tongue, he could sing the songs he had known in a soft, plaintive voice, which moved these rough men to tears; and in spite of the terrible experience that had wrecked his mind he displayed no more fear of Mr. Arbuckle; he never avoided him, but would smile into his face with the innocent candour of a babe.

What Mr. Arbuckle thought of his handiwork found no expression in his manner or discourse. He was still the strict, arbitrary, profane critic of the crew that he was before. What Captain Haskins thought could be surmised by the fact that he spoke no more to his mate, and entered the incident in his official log. The men were less guarded; boldly announcing their intention to throw him overboard if he went much further, and warning Mr. Arbuckle in any event to be prepared for legal proceedings on shore—which did not in the least affect the officer at the time, this being the last gossip given him by George on the night of his ducking.

It was when the anchor was dropped off Tompkinsville, Staten Island, that he broke out again, to wind up the passage with a proper assertion of his dignity. A slight mistake on the part of one of them in paying out chain, and the smiling ap-

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proval of the mistake in the faces of the rest, induced him to lay about him with a handspike, and when he had finished, three only of the crew—Tom, Martin, and George—could stand erect. Even the cook was disabled. When he left his galley to join the row, he was met, not by a pistol shot—simply by the swinging handspike, and the hand that held that sharp carving knife was crushed.

Canvas had been furled while towing up the bay, so when the pilot had been put ashore in the dingey, the work of the day was done, and all hands went to a late supper—served one-handed by the cook. When he had cleared off the dishes from the cabin table, and gone forward, Mr. Arbuckle, courageous and confident from his recent victory, reminded the captain of his pre-expressed desire to be paid off before docking.

“You want your pay, do you?” asked the indignant little captain, heatedly. “You want to quit me now to escape arrest, and leave me to dock this vessel with three men. You’ll get your money to-morrow, and you’ll get it in the presence of the policeman who arrests you.”

The argument and quarrel which followed need not be detailed. It ended in a crashing blow of the six-foot officer’s fist on the temple of the five-foot



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captain. The little man reeled, sat down on a stool, slid off, and stretched himself on the floor with the deliberation of a man preparing for sleep, while Mr. Arbuckle, breathing loudly and deeply, looked down on him with angry eyes. But, as he looked, the anger left his eyes, and his breathing, though still loud and deep, changed its character. He examined the captain's head. There was no outward sign of injury, and he felt for a movement of the heart. The breast was warm, but as rigid as the face with its staring eyes. He stood up, then sat down on the stool, and looked at the man he had killed.

He had bargained to receive his money and discharge before docking if he killed a man on the passage. Here was the dead man; where was the money?

He procured keys from the captain's pocket, lighted the lamp in his room, searched his desk and found, not only money enough to pay off all hands, but the account of wages due each man up to the end of the following day, and their discharges, signed by Captain Haskins, his own stating that as mate he was V. G. (very good). He counted out the money due him, signed his name to the account, pocketed the money and discharge, and

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locked the desk. As far as the world was concerned he was officially paid off as mate of the *Warrior*. Then, lifting the corpse to the bed in the room, he turned down the lamp and sought the deck.

It was a dark, wintry evening, with cold rain and a colder wind out of the north, which froze the rain as it fell. Deck, rail, and rigging were already coated with ice, and overboard large cakes of it, fragments of the Hudson River pack, were floating in on the swift flood-tide. The vessel was alone at the anchorage, moored beyond easy hailing distance from the shore, and all lights were turned out forward except the riding light in the fore rigging. The stooped figure of Martin, standing the first anchor watch, showed dimly in the darkness at the fore-castle door, but the rest of the stricken men were undoubtedly in their bunks. It was an ideal night for murder and its concomitants; but, cold as it was, Mr. Arbuckle perspired profusely. He climbed the poop steps and looked over the stern, where the dingey, tugging at its painter, bobbed and rocked on the black water below. Long and silently he mused, and often mopped his brow with his handkerchief; then his musings found expression.

“Won’t do,” he muttered. “Doctors would

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know he didn't drown. Adrift in the dingey, may be—no oars—frozen to death? But I need the boat for an alibi. Frozen to death—how? Falls overboard—floats long enough to freeze. Good—a life-buoy! Some one throws it. Who? I must be ashore. One o' the men—the idiot. He could throw it, and do no more. I must come out just in time to hear cries for help, climb overboard, miss the skipper, find the life-buoy gone, and raise h——l. Idiot on anchor watch. When is he on watch? But I can arrange that.”

He removed a life-buoy from the quarter-rail, entered the cabin by the after companionway, and drew the cork ring over the head and shoulders of the body, twisting the still pliable arms and fingers around it to hold it in place. Next he carried the body up and rested it against the taffrail until he had assured himself that Martin was still forward. Then he carefully lowered it over the stern, shifting his hold to the hair, and reaching down until the feet touched the water before letting go. There was hardly a splash; the life-buoy was forced up snug under the arms, and the body, shoulders out, floated away on the tide. No intelligent coroner would pronounce this a case of murder.

Mr. Arbuckle descended to his room, where he

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changed his clothes, putting on the suit he had worn at Callao. As he donned the coat he felt of a letter in the pocket—the letter given him by the consul, and which he had forgotten to deliver. He read the address, “Martin Mathews, brigantine Warrior, Callao, Peru, care American Consul.” He no longer perspired so profusely, but trembled from the reaction of feeling which followed the safe disposal of the body. A glass of spirits from the captain’s stock remedied this, and, going on deck, he bawled out in his most officer-like tone: “Who’s on watch? Lay aft here.” Martin obeyed, and met him at the main-mast.

“Here’s a letter I got from the consul at Callao—for you. Forgot all about it.”

“Thank you, sir,” answered Martin, as he took the letter. “I ’spect it’s from my sister inshore here. Curious, sir, that I come back to Tompkinsville to read it.”

“Never mind about Tompkinsville. Who stands watch to-night?”

“Only three of us, sir. We ’greed to let the rest have all night in. Tom relieves me at ’leven, and George relieves him at three. I came on at eight, sir, as you ordered at supper time.”

“That’s all right. Let George come on at

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eleven, and let Tom take the morning watch. The harbour's quiet at midnight, and river thieves work late. Let Tom take the last watch. Understand?"

"Yes, sir. I'll call George at 'leven."

"And keep your watch on the poop. Pass the word along. Make that idiot understand—to stand watch on the poop. But don't disturb the captain. He's sick. If he feels better I may go ashore in the dingey."

"All right, sir. May I read my letter forrard, sir?"

"Go ahead—get it off your mind."

Martin disappeared in the direction of the fore-castle, and when Mr. Arbuckle saw him emerge a little later he went below.

"Got to make sure," he said. "Got to have the idiot on deck, and I can't disturb the watches any more. Make 'em suspicious. I'll wait till 'leven o'clock—when the skipper feels better."

He waited, passing the time as he could, and when the cabin clock struck eleven went on deck, first fortifying himself with a glass of whisky. George and Martin were coming aft, the older man earnestly explaining the orders to the younger. Mr. Arbuckle, fully as earnestly, repeated them,

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enjoining George to stand watch on the poop, and to not disturb Captain Haskins, who was feeling better.

“And I’m going ashore,” he said to Martin. “Be back about midnight. ’Fore you turn in bring the dingey up to the gangway.”

Martin answered respectfully, and obeyed him, while the smiling idiot watched the operation. Then Mr. Arbuckle descended the side ladder, slacking himself carefully down by the man-ropes. These were two short, fancifully covered ropes, leading from brass stanchions in the rail, one each side of the ladder, to within a foot of the water. They were covered with ice and hard to hold, yet he paused halfway down to repeat the command to “stand watch on the poop.”

“Yes, sir,” answered the old sailor, as he climbed the rail with a pump-brake in his hand. “The boy’ll do that all right, but I want to say something first. You’re going, George Arbuckle. You’ve got your money and discharge, and this is the last we’ll see o’ you. I know the trick. You’re not takin’ your clothes, ’cause you have none worth takin’. We’ll have to wait three days ’fore we get our money, and then we can’t find you. You’ll lay low and ship again to cripple more men.

## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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But I've got this to say—and, you chew it over, too—you just remember that I had the satisfaction of tellin' you. Hold on, there!" (Mr. Arbuckle had moved his hands upward.) "Don't you come up, or you'll go down by the run. I'll brain you, you devil, if you climb that ladder. You stay there and listen. You've pretty near killed this crew. You've hammered and clubbed us to the last man, and one of us you drove insane—this boy here. Look at him, you brute! He's your own son. Do you hear? Your own son—the little boy—that we all thought died o' starvation. He didn't die—nor the mother, either, at the time. She came back to Tompkinsville since this brig sailed from New York, and she died here eight months ago. She fooled you. The letter I got tells of it. And the boy was a Salvation Army man, and shipped in this vessel. She told that, but she didn't know that he was to meet his father and be driven insane. Look at your work, you hell-hound! Look at your work!" And the old man pointed at the smiling idiot.

Mr. Arbuckle descended quickly. The ropes and steps were very slippery, but this may not have been the reason of his hurry. The demented youth looked down and gibbered. The man in the boat

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said nothing. When Martin cast off the painter, he shipped the oars and pulled shoreward.

He was not back at midnight; he came at one o'clock, when the ebb-tide had gathered force, and the vessel was tailing down the harbour with the side ladder on the offshore side. He hailed as he approached, but the anchor watch, looking down from the poop rail, did not answer the order to take the painter, so he pulled to the steps and essayed to climb them with the painter in his hand. But steps and man-ropes were still icy. He slipped, scrambled, lost the painter, and as the boat floated sternward, found himself in the water, holding on to the end of the after man-rope, with the side ladder tantalizingly close, but not within reach.

The tide was strong and held him away from the ladder. The water was icy cold, and his teeth chattered. Uttering an angry curse, he pulled himself up—high as his strength would enable him—and with less of his body immersed, he swung toward the ladder; but strong man though he was, he could not support so much of his weight and that of his water-soaked clothing with one hand, even to catch the ladder with the other. With finger nails scraping the coveted steps, he slid down the rope, and barely held on at the end. Again



## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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and again he tried, only to fatigue himself in failure.

“On deck, there!” he called at last. “George, gi’ me a hand here! George! On deck! Hear me? Gi’ me a hand!”

George heard, but remained on the poop rail, silently observing him.

“George!” he called. “Come down to the gangway. Stand watch at the gangway now! Hear me? And send me down a bowline—a running bowline. Understand? Make a running bowline ’round the after man-rope, and slip it down to me. Don’t you hear me, George?”

Had there been more of command in the tone of his voice George might have obeyed, in a manner. But he spoke pleadingly.

“On deck, there!” he called again, raising his voice. “Forward there. Turn out, somebody, and gi’ me a hand. Man overboard! Man overboard! Any one hear me? Help! Help!”

The idiot above chuckled and repeated the call softly: “Man overboard! Man overboard!”

“George, my boy,” he begged, “help me up. Call the men. No, call Tom—don’t bother Martin. Go forrard and call Tom—that’s a good boy.”

## *Shipmates*

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“Good boy! Good boy! Good boy!” was repeated to him.

“Yes, George, you are. But help me. I’m your father, George. I just learned. Understand? Your father. I didn’t know it before. Neither did you. I thought you died when you were little; but you didn’t die. And now I’m going to stand by you, George, if you’ll help me. I’m your father.”

“Fadder — fadder — fadder — fadder,” came back to him. Then, perhaps because he had just heard repetitions of Martin’s denunciatory words, he chattered, “Diden die—diden die—diden—diden die—you devil—you devil, devil, devil, devil—brute, you brute, you brute. Look at your work, work, work—look at your work—diden die, diden die, diden die—” and it merged into incoherent drivel.

The man in the water groaned hoarsely, and, with eyes bulging and veins in his hands, neck, and temples standing out like cording, he strained his muscles and scraped the side with the edges of his shoe soles in a mighty effort of strength. Then came the penalty of overworking chilled muscles; he slid down, panting hoarsely, and groaned: “I’m cramped. I’ve got the cramps. Help!”

## *At the End of the Man-rope*

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His voice was weak now, and he saved it; but, while he rested, both hands gripping the rope over his head, the gibberish above changed to this—the clear, bell-like voice echoing on the shore:

“My brave lad he sleeps in his faded coat of blue,  
In a lonely grave unknown lies the heart that beat so true.  
He sank faint and hungry among the famished brave,  
And they laid him sad and lonely within his nameless  
grave.”

“O God, have mercy on my soul!” muttered the man, as the singer ended the verse. His eyes were closed now, and while the boy above hummed the melody softly, he repeated to himself the words of the consul at Callao:

“The wrong we do comes home to us this side of the grave, and the men we kill come back to watch us die.”

Something brushed him, and he opened his eyes. Within a foot of his face was the head and torso of a man supported by a life-buoy. The staring eyes looked into his own. With a gasp and a gurgle, he let go of the rope, barely clutched the life-buoy, and the two went out to sea together.



## A FALL FROM GRACE

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YANK TATE was a single-minded jack-of-all-trades—short, square-bearded, open-eyed, and as honest as a human being may be. In spite of his versatility he was a master seaman and mechanic, and, helped by his single-mindedness, faithful devotee of an ideal which had come to him in childhood and clung to him through the years. It had taken him in early manhood from carpenter and joiner's work to a shipyard at less pay. It had impelled him to go to sea in the first carpenter's berth that offered. It had dominated all influences that shaped his wanderings, and finally, after years of experience as a football of Fate, it had brought him to Eastern waters—the nursery of pirates—and left him stranded “on the beach” at Manila, from which he had been rescued by the Reverend Mr. Todd, missionary, who recognised good material. Mr. Todd laboured and wrestled with his soul, vainly, until Yank learned that he needed a mate in his little missionary brig, whereat both

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made concessions. Yank got a berth and acknowledged himself saved, provided that Mr. Todd would consider the agitation closed and not expect him to pray in his watch below. And the missionary agreed. He knew nothing of the secret, unsullied ambition hidden in Yank's honest heart to become a roaring, bloody-minded, walk-the-plank, skull-and-crossbones buccaneer; so the watch below was given up to sleep and secular thought, and Yank's chances for backsliding were a hundred per cent better.

But thus far he had met no pirates, unless the nondescript craft coming out of the west propelled by sweeps was of this nature.

Mr. Todd was palpably anxious. Sweltering through six days of dead calm, with tar oozing from ropes and pitch from deck seams, while the barometer dropped steadily to 28.56—sure sign of a typhoon—was troubling enough without this additional menace. Below in his desk was the accumulation of seven years' innocent trading with the innocent islanders—about ten thousand dollars' worth of little iridescent globules much valued in jewellery manufacture—which he had taken in exchange for Bibles, knives, trinkets, etc., from different converts on the islands of his route. And here he was in piratical seas with a small crew of

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non-combative Kanakas in his forecastle, and only one white man to help him.

He was as good a seaman as Yank and a better navigator; yet he could not classify the approaching vessel. She had the hull of a Chinese junk, the mainsail and gaff topsail of a schooner, and a lateen foresail slung to a heavy yard, while out over the bows was a cocky stump bowsprit and old-fashioned sprit-sailyard with sail attached—clearly a hybrid of the high seas, a makeshift of hard times; and as she slopped her way along, her sails flapped ludicrously with the draught of her motion.

“Perhaps,” said Yank, handing the glass to his superior, his brown eyes glistening, “she’s a pirate. Ten sweeps and two ports to a side? Big crew.”

“Let’s hope not,” answered Mr. Todd, gravely. “But if so, let us hope that the other one is a war vessel.”

Half a mile to the southward, and extending east and west about four miles each way, was the northern face of an atoll, or coral reef, inclosing a lagoon. Within this lagoon was anchored the other craft mentioned—a large, black and rakish brig, whose sparkling guns and generally stylish appearance suggested government ownership.

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Though they had flown their own flag that morning as a slow current drifted them around the atoll, the signal was not answered, and none of her crew was visible. Close study with the glass had shown them a thickening of the reef on the south side, where the *débris* of the sea had formed land, and here were a few stunted palms and three or four tents. The same scrutiny had disclosed an opening in the reef on the east, and another on the north side. Had there been wind, Mr. Todd would have entered for further acquaintance. As it was, with a typhoon coming, the atoll was a place of danger, and he wondered why the brig did not warp out. Early in the morning he had sent down upper spars and stowed all canvas except a storm spanker and foretopmast-staysail, and now, with nothing to do but to watch the approach of the suspect to the westward, he improved the time by hiding his treasure and other valuables, and destroying his account book.

But to no avail, for the first remark of a villainous-looking swashbuckler who climbed over his rail an hour later was:

“Been a-lookin’ fer you. Hand ober them pearls.”

He was a giant mulatto, with bloodshot eyes,



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fang-like teeth, and a settled grin on a face further distorted by every evil thought and passion. He was followed by a crew of about thirty—cutthroats all—as nondescript as their craft bumping alongside. They were of every breed of men—black, white, and yellow; they were dressed fantastically, each to suit himself, but were armed alike, with short cutlass and heavy pistols. They crowded the wondering Kanakas forward while their leader interviewed Mr. Todd and his mate.

“Pearls, Mr. Todd,” he repeated. “Hand ober dem pearls.”

“What pearls?”

“No time to hear you lie,” he said. “Hear all about you and your pile. Come aft here, four hands,” he called to his men.

Four came. They seemed to know what was wanted. Quickly and silently they seized Mr. Todd, throttled his angry protest, bore him to the deck, and bound him; then fastening the end of the main-staysail halyards to his ankles, they hauled on the other part and swayed him up, feet first, until his fingers cleared the deck. He writhed and struggled to lift his head—successfully; but they fastened his wrists to the life rail, bowsed him higher, and belayed. Yank Tate watched

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in fascinated horror, and the pirate lighted a cheroot.

“When you’re ready to tell, I’ll lower you,” he said quietly.

The unfortunate missionary groaned, and cried unto Heaven for help; then he appealed to Yank, then to his crew, huddled near the windlass, lastly to the pirate captain.

“Mercy!” he gurgled. “Yes, yes. Take them.”

Flesh and blood could have stood it no longer. He was black in the face when they stretched him out on the deck, and for five minutes was unconscious; then he opened his eyes.

“Where?” asked the pirate, bending over him.

Mr. Todd did not answer.

“Up wid him again,” ordered the mulatto, and they manned the rope; but Mr. Todd lifted his hand.

“Under the cabin,” he whispered hoarsely—“starboard side—near the deadwood—loose plank.”

“Good.”

The captain descended the main hatch and returned in a few minutes with a canvas ditty-bag that bulged with its contents. His mood had

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changed; he laughed and waved the bag over the head of the still prostrate missionary.

“All in the sabin’g o’ souls,” he chuckled. “All fo’ de glory o’ God. Now, I tell you,” he added, more seriously, “you go right ’long an’ git some more. I wait for ’em. I let you keep this little rotten ol’ brig—good ’nough to sabe de heathen wid—no good to me—too small. But—how much money you got down in yo’ desk?”

Mr. Todd rose unsteadily to his feet and answered brokenly: “I have a very little—not a week’s pay for my crew. I have provisions, yams, cereals, salt meat, preserved goods, coffee. Take what you please—kill us if you like—but, I enjoin you, in the name of an outraged God, not to torture us.”

The pirate’s face sobered to its sneering grin. He pointed to his craft alongside.

“See dat vessel? What you call her rig? Once she was a mandarin junk—sixty men. Dey all walk de plank. See dat mainsail? Dat belong to down-east Yankee trader. Cappen an’ six men—all yo’ countrymen. I hang ’em all up to dat gaff ’fore I cut de mast out fo’ myself. See dat fo’sail? Arab dhow. Dey all roast. Wha’ you whinin’ ’bout? You’s de goose dat lays de egg.

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Dat's why I let you go. You keep yo' money. You keep yo' brig an' you men, an' you grub. Sometime I ketch you again and git mo' pearls."

"Monster!" said Mr. Todd. "And do you think that I shall be a party to such a compact? Fool! Kill me at once, and your chance of continuing your infamous career is better."

"Wha' you do?"

"Do you think," went on the enraged missionary, now in command of his voice and vocabulary, "that you have robbed a weakling—a man who will rest content? You have taken my all. It is mine—gained by honest barter. There are men-of-war in these seas. I have influence. I will see you hanged."

For a moment or two the pirate chief seemed to be thinking deeply; then he said to his men:

"Put it 'roun' his neck, run him up to de masthead and slack him down."

Mr. Todd was not bound—he was simply held tightly in the clutches of three while the fourth knotted a hangman's noose in the end of the hal-yards, and adjusted the knot under his ear. He struggled and fought, crying out inarticulately, until the men forward lifted him clear of the deck; then up he went, wriggling and twisting,

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his long coat-tails and longer legs thrashing out at right angles to his line of ascent and his hands gripping the rope over his head. This saved him. Had he been bound he would have strangled. As he went up to the block aloft, Yank Tate, wonder and doubt, shock and horror, intermingled in his open countenance, stepped up to the captain.

“Hadn’t oughter do this, cap’n,” he said, argumentatively and almost pleadingly. “There’s a man-o’-war in yonder. She can see; she’ll know, and she’ll foller you.”

“Wha—who——” yelled the pirate, hilariously. “Bill Swarth—a man-o’-war. Yah-yah, he’ll see; he’ll know—but he won’t foller. Hey, dere,” he called forward, for Mr. Todd was chock-a-block—“slack him down—slack down de golden goose.”

Yank drew back, and Mr. Todd came down. He lay on the deck for a time, as before; then, assisted by Yank, arose to his feet and clung to the life rail, his breath coming and going in wheezing groans, while his dark eyes sparkled luridly.

“Now,” said the mulatto, in a quiet voice, “when you see me hanged you’ll know how it feels, and ’joy it much better. I’m goin’ now. I won’t report you to any ’Merican consuls roun’

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here, 'cause you might be called home to tell why you swindle natives in yo' missionary brig. So you jess go 'long an' git mo' pearls fo' me. An', say"—he pointed to the atoll—"don't make no complaints to dat man-o'-war in dar, or you'll lose de money I lef' you, an' you' brig. An' you need 'em in yo' business."

Mr. Todd, his solemn face working convulsively, and his long frame swaying as he rested his weight first on one foot, then on the other, gave voice to short speech, which in his honest anger was a prayer—a supplication—a calling down of the wrath of Omnipotence on the head of the despoiler, but outwardly, with regard to its terseness, explosiveness, and commonplaceness of expression, it was an oath, nothing else—a plain imprecation—and it moved the pirate to tears—of laughter.

"Yah-yah," he yelled, hilariously, while he danced back and forth, swinging the bag of pearls. "Yah—ho-ho— I better go sabe souls myself. I cuss most as good as dat myself." Then he sobered suddenly, and ordering his crew back to their craft, followed them, singing loudly with mock earnestness:

" 'There is work for us all in de vineyard of de Lord——' "

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He sang only this much. Mr. Todd, with fingers in his ears, had turned his back and was moving aft, which gave Yank Tate the opportunity of his life. He followed the pirate chief and caught him at the rail, interrupting the song.

“Got all hands, cappen?” he said quickly. “Want a good hand—a carpenter?”

For answer he was knocked prone upon his back by a blow of the huge mulatto’s fist; and while lying there, too dazed to rise, and with his pulpy nose spouting streams of blood, listened to this:

“No, you no-account hypocrite—you robber of natives and obtainer of money under false pretences—I don’t want you in my ship. I’m p’ticular who I ’sociate with.”

The pirate climbed over the rail, ordering fastenings cast off and sweeps manned. When ten yards separated the two craft Yank arose, disfigured, chagrined, and as angry as was possible for him to be with a fellow creature.

“You come back here, you half-cooked moke!” he yelled, shaking his fist. “Come back here an’ fight it out. I kin lick you, big as you are. Come back, you nigger—you nigger—you damn nigger!”

A derisive laugh rang out, and the strange

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craft swung around the brig's bow, making back to the west. Yank drew a bucket of water, swabbed his swollen features, and went aft, where Mr. Todd was leaning moodily against the rail.

"What happened?" asked the missionary.  
"Why did he strike you?"

"Well—just this," answered Yank, in some confusion, not knowing how to explain; then deciding that an out-and-out lie was best, he said: "Went up to him an' told him that he was wrong, an' wicked, an'—an' such like—an' told him we'd pray fur him. But he didn't agree to it, an' plugged me."

"You were wrong yourself, if not wicked. No prayer will avail with him. He is a type. I am an instrument of the vengeance of the Lord. I feel that I have been chosen—perhaps you also. I feel that the Lord will decree, having sorely tried us, that we are to meet that man again."

"Mebbe. I kin lick the stuffin' out o' any damn Ethiopian, stand up an' knock down, that ever stole a chicken, if he'll only——"

"Hush. When will you reform your vocabulary? Go forward; send three hands aft to the spanker, and stand by the foretopmast-staysail sheets. There is wind coming. While you are



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waiting, get all the small chain on deck and overhaul as much forward of the windlass as you can. We may have to use it—though I doubt that we can club-haul against a reef rising out of the deep sea.”

Yank answered and obeyed. And the events of the next twenty-four hours followed in such quick succession that he was spared further pain of chagrin and disappointment. The typhoon came down upon them with a preliminary darkness to the north, followed by a deluge of rain. Then came wind—gentle at first, which enabled them to cast the brig on the port tack with small steerage way—then a succession of furious blasts, the second of which ripped the storm spanker to ribbons, then a steady, screaming pressure which bore men against the lee rail and flattened the ground-swell of the sea to a milk-white froth. Even with the helm hard down the brig would not steer, but paid off toward the atoll. And Mr. Todd knew that with the staysail furled to balance the loss of the spanker, the brig would only drift bodily toward the jagged reef to leeward. As there was not a sail on board half as strong as the lost spanker, and as the staysail might go at any moment, he decided that there was but one thing to

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do—scud, on the only track open, through the northern inlet of the reef to a dubious anchorage, or to a further journey through the eastern inlet to sea room and safety.

He took the wheel himself—with the Kanaka helmsman to leeward to help him—and put it up, roaring orders to Yank regarding ground tackle. The brig paid off, straightened to an even keel, and rolling slightly, more from uneven wind pressure than from the action of the sea, charged down toward the nest of coral.

A quarter mile away on all sides sea and sky were merged in the cloud of spindrift that rose from the froth, and beyond this was the reef. But he was a wise man, this Mr. Todd, and he had taken the bearings of the inlet while there was still time. He steered a compass course, and soon distinguished the shadowy, loftier outlines of the reef to starboard and port on the flat sea ahead of him, and knew that he was right. With a moment's time now to look around he saw, off on the starboard quarter, the pirate ship, dismasted, broadside to the wind, and surely doomed. Then the smudge shut her out, and Mr. Todd steered on, with a grim smile on his face; for he was but human, and human beings lately triced up by the

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heels, hanged by the neck, and despoiled are apt to forget the golden rule and its corollaries.

The little brig whizzed through the inlet into water no calmer than the flat turmoil without, but lacking, in a measure, the overlying cloud of spume; and Mr. Todd saw, in a hurried look to starboard, the big brig close up to the reef, with cables, taut as iron bars, made fast to projections of coral. The sight decided him. The brig's commander would never have made fast to the reef had he not distrusted the holding ground beneath, and with a shout to Yank Tate to come aft, he shifted the wheel and steered roughly for the eastern inlet. Yank appeared.

"Never mind the anchors," shouted Mr. Todd in his ear. "Rig a tarpaulin in the port main rigging to help steer. I'm making for the east inlet."

Yank attended to this and Mr. Todd soon picked up the opening to the southeast. To allow for leeway he steered a full point higher than the inlet's direction, and the staysail gave the little brig good headway, with the square of canvas aft to balance it. All might have gone well had not a gun boomed out aboard the large armed brig hanging to the reef and a solid shot plunged into

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the main-mast six feet below the hounds. There was no sail on the mast except the tarpaulin in the rigging; but in that furious pressure of wind no mast weakened in this manner could stand. The top-gallant mast was on deck, but the top-mast and upper part of the lower mast sagged forward, slowly and steadily; lanyards stretched like rubber strings, then snapped, and down came the fabric amid the roars of Mr. Todd and Yank to "Lay aft, for your lives." It crashed on the lee rail, balanced a moment, and rolled overboard; then, held by the still intact mainstay, it drifted to the quarter—an embarrassing drag, which pulled the brig's head off before the wind, against the wheel, which was hard down.

The crew, though frightened, were unhurt. With axes and knives they slashed at rigging until the wreck went astern, then they set a double fore-spencer—an alleged storm-sail forward corresponding to the spanker aft. But in spite of its age and weakness it held together, and the brig sped toward the inlet, rushed through at ten knots, and squared away dead before the wind, for at least a ten-hour scud, as there was no heaving-to with all after-sail gone. Mr. Todd plotted his track, and when the wind moderated rigged a jury main-

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mast and sail of his maintop-gallant gear; then, with short head sail, beat back to the atoll with two dominating speculations in his mind—as to whether his pearls were above water or below, and as to why he had been fired at—arriving three days later; by which time Yank's sore nose was healed and his spirits recovered.

They noted the white tents on the southern edge of the atoll as they skirted it, and well over to the eastward—as far as where the reef broke up into the maze of fragments through which ran the deep east channel—were moving specks, men, undoubtedly, in red shirts, who seemed to be waving caps. High and dry near the north inlet, unkempt and forlorn, was the junk-like hull of the pirate ship; but there was no sign of the large brig, within or without. They sailed around until abreast of the wreck; then, with main yards backed, the brig drifted. Leaving Yank in charge, Mr. Todd lowered a boat and visited the wreck, confident that it was deserted.

He was right; it was not only empty of living creatures, but stripped and gutted of everything inanimate that was movable. There was not even ballast in the hold; the cabin and forecastle were void of furniture and clothing. The sails and gear

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had, of course, gone with the masts, but guns and carriages, deck blocks, pump-brakes, handspikes, belaying-pins, and all ropes, lines, and running gear had been removed by men. The dingy brown hull was a shell, and though he searched high and low, Mr. Todd found no trace of his pearls. He returned to his little brig with gloomy face.

"Bothered 'bout somethin' in yonder," said Yank as he climbed the rail. "Makin' a big smoke." He pointed south, toward the thickened part of the atoll, where black smoke soared skyward.

"We'll go in," answered his chief, determinedly, after a look through the glass. "I am not yet sure of my duty, or of what is required of me; but they are evidently in trouble—perhaps hungry—and possibly open to terms."

They swung the yards and sailed in, across the lagoon to within a hundred yards of the beach, where, after first satisfying himself that the shouting men on the strip of coral had no boats, Mr. Todd dropped anchor and sculled in with his dingey, stopping at a safe distance.

"Come in," yelled a tall, black-eyed, sun-burned man with big mustache, who seemed to be the leader. "Come in. We're all right—only

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d——d hungry and thirsty.” Then the rest—hollowed-eyed and gaunt—voiced the invitation in unmistakable sincerity. They were armed, to the last man, with long knives, and were dressed in red shirts and caps; but they were not the men who had boarded the brig.

“Who are you?” asked Mr. Todd. “Why are you here? You are armed; I am not, and have lately suffered from it. Explain who you are.”

“Come in. We’re all right. We’re harmless. Here—look.” The leader tossed his long knife toward Mr. Todd. It sank in two fathoms.

“Disarm—every man Jack of you,” he shouted, and a shower of knives fell around the boat.

“Now, come in. We’re marooned to starve—that’s all that ails us. We belong to the brig that shot away your main-mast. D——d sorry—thought it was Chink. Had an old war with him, and never thought he’d let any one get away from him. So we let go at you.”

“You mean,” queried Mr. Todd, “that you fired on what you supposed to be a pirate crew who had first disposed of myself and men?”

“Yes—that’s it. We knew his old tub—we

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knew Chink; and he never spared any one before. Thought he'd taken your brig for himself."

"And why are you here?"

"We came in to mend our rudder, and had to stay through the blow. We got boats out, took Chink and his gang off the reef, just in time to save 'em alive, and afterward found his main-mast and towed it in here—over yonder, with the guns and dunnage." The leader pointed up the beach. "We were going to help him refit, and stripped his craft to launch her, but he put up a job on us when our rudder was fixed; got all hands ashore here but my mate, then rushed for the boats—the lot of them—put off to the brig, killed the mate as we watched 'em, and went to sea. We're supposed to starve, while he gets away with my brig and your pearls. He told me about his haul, and I saw the bag."

Mr. Todd turned and hailed Yank, ordering him to strike out a barrel of bread and a cask of water. Then he sculled out to receive them, and when Yank had lowered them into the dingey, he invited him to come ashore.

"We have nothing to fear from these men," he said. "They are pirates beyond doubt—but pi-



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rates with a grievance equal to ours. Like us, they are instruments. We can aid each other."

Which partly explains Mr. Todd's later acquiescence to a questionable scheme propounded by Captain Swarth at a conference in one of the tents—the dominant reason being the enthusiastic approval of the single-minded Yank Tate. The scheme was, to temporarily change the missionary brig to a pirate brigantine by substituting Chink's main-mast with its still intact mainsail and gaff top-sail for the jury rig; and thus disguised, to sail in pursuit of Chink, whom Captain Swarth vowed he could find, and recover by law of might the brig and the pearls. Yank stipulated ghoulishly that in return for his services as carpenter in masting the brig, he be allowed the privilege of prodding Chink along the plank when he walked it, and Mr. Todd stipulated that he be not involved in conflict or contact with either side, receiving his pearls merely for the loan of his brig. Captain Swarth promised, and Mr. Todd chided Yank on his bloodthirstiness.

"You are ever a backslider," he said sternly. "What will be your future when you no longer have me to guide and advise?"

"Don't know," answered Yank, calmly, as he

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bit off a chew of forbidden tobacco. "It's the least of my troubles; and this good-for-evil business don't always work. I gave him good—promised to pray for him, and he gave me evil—plugged me in the nose. An' then, you know, I'm an instrument."

Mr. Todd sighed and turned away, realizing that Yank's independence came only of a prospective berth with Captain Swarth, who had taken a strong fancy to him. He was certainly a valuable man to any skipper. He dressed down and shortened the junk's main-mast to suitable dimensions for use in the brig, and finding a split in the lower end, he constructed a forge and shrunk an iron band or two around it; he invented a coral paint, to whiten the black brig, of coral powder and boiled oil from Mr. Todd's paint locker, fashioning the mill for pulverizing coral with two grindstones and a couple of pump-brakes. He was cheery, industrious, and enthusiastic, loving work and his fellow men, and limited only by his unseemly ambition to burn, sink, and destroy.

Mr. Todd had a hold full of provisions intended for distribution and sale at the islands on his route, so there was no lack of food for these forty men, though the water-supply was low. A kitchen was

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set up on shore, and the bewildered Kanakas impressed into the service of Swarth's cook, but they were of little use. There being no carpenter in the pirate crew, Yank was appointed foreman of construction, Mr. Todd and Captain Swarth became consulting engineers, and the crew—rascals all, but white men and able seamen—were to carry on the work, which they did, first diving up their long knives.

Sheers rose on the brig's deck and the reduced main-mast was stepped; rigging was cut out and set up; the top-mast was sent up and equipped; then, when some sail-making was done, the brig had become a brigantine—square-rigged forward, schooner-rigged aft. Through it all Yank Tate looked for orders less and less to Mr. Todd, and more and more to Captain Swarth—yet, from no lack of respect for Mr. Todd's seamanship, which was of a quality that impressed even the pirate chief—a skilled specialist—to the point of asking how he, a mere missionary, had become so familiar with nautical technique.

"Observation," answered Mr. Todd, "and a few voyages before the Lord called me."

"Um—humph! Sure you were called? Men like you are scarce aboard ship. Sure you were

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not called to the quarter-deck? I knew by the way you handled your craft in the typhoon that you were one in a hundred—in fact, I thought you were Chink—and he's a whole seaman. And yet Chink got dismasted. Well, I want a mate and quartermaster. Square it with yourself, and the berth's yours at any time."

But Mr. Todd sadly and firmly declined.

"I feel," he said, "that I am entitled to my little worldly store against the chances of old age, but not to begin a career of violence and revenge—though the world has used me badly, I admit."

"Suppose we can't recover your pearls?"

But the missionary sighed, and refused to discuss it.

They took Chink's four carronades, even though the powder was wet, and cut ports in the bulwarks against Mr. Todd's protest. It was done for its moral influence on the missionary, and Yank voted with Swarth. A few coats of white paint without, and bunks for forty men within, completed the little craft's degradation, and she put to sea with Swarth in command, Yank Tate in his old berth—mate and carpenter—and her quondam commander, the earnest and forceful Mr. Todd, a quiescent and non-combative passenger.

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Swarth headed for Pauna Lo island for water and traces of Chink, and obtained both. A wild-eyed man came off in the boat and told of his being marooned by Chink for a small disagreement, and of Chink's announced intention to ravage the China seas with his fine new ten-gun brig—"fit to thrash a man-of-war."

The man was shipped and the brig sailed west, leaving behind six Kanaka deserters, who, no doubt, could live and die happily on this well-stocked, well-watered island. But Mr. Todd, on hearing this, voiced gently a sad suspicion that Captain Swarth and the recreant Yank had compounded the desertion—which may, or may not, have been true. Yank was too supremely happy to deny anything criminal and disgraceful.

There were sure signs of Chink here and there in the China Sea—wreckage, drifting boats holding dead men, and an occasional smouldering and derelict hull; but they had cruised three months before, early one morning, hove to in a howling gale off the southern end of Formosa; they sighted a craft, hull down in the west, which Swarth knew for his brig. She was on the starboard tack, under double-reefed topsails, spanker and foretopmast-staysail,

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and, the wind being out of the east, lay almost directly to leeward.

“Our work is cut out,” said Swarth to his men when they had assembled at his call. “We’ll run down flying a distress signal to fool him, and we’ll keep out of sight till we get there. Then—there’s no turning back; for this craft can’t lay alongside in this sea. We’ll board our own brig and take her back. We’ve nothing but knives, but we know how to use them. No quarter, for you’ll get none if you lose.”

They yelled an approving response and flourished their knives. And Yank, having none, elevated his broad-axe—a murderous tool with ten inches of razor-like edge—and yelled the loudest.

Yards were squared, reefs taken out, and the little vessel was headed toward the brig, while a British ensign, union down, was fastened in the port main rigging; then all but Swarth and a couple of men—the three in yellow oilskins—hid themselves behind the rail, sharpening their knives as they waited. In two hours they could make out the huge figure of Chink on the brig’s quarter, and shortly after were within hailing distance.

“Brig ahoy!” roared Swarth through a trumpet. “Brig ahoy!”

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“What you want?” came back faintly against the wind. “Keep off wi’ dat craft in dis big sea.”

“Brig ahoy!” again called Swarth, as though not understanding Chink’s answer. “I’m short o’ grub and water. I’ll heave to to windward o’ you and send a boat.”

Chink sprang frantically to the top of the skylight, and, waving to his helmsman to put the wheel up, sang out thundering orders to his men, plainly distinguishable now, for the brigantine was nearly upon him.

It was too late. Swarth had gained the time he needed, and now putting his helm hard down, rounded to alongside the brig—yards catching yards aloft, rigging snapping, and Chink’s cosmopolitan crew rivalling their leader in blasphemous objurgation. Then the two vessels crashed together, and a dozen or so of Chink’s men sprang over with their short cutlasses, ready to exterminate the lubberly visitors. But they did not return; forty red-shirted men arose to receive them, and great was their surprise while it lasted. There were oaths and exclamations, of course, steel clicked against steel, and some red shirts were slashed and stained darker red; but it was not a fight—merely a killing.

“Hurrah, lads!” shouted Captain Swarth, as

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he sprang over the rail to his own craft. "Here are the men who left us to starve. Give it to 'em."

Yank among them with his broad-axe, they followed; and Mr. Todd, unarmed and dignified, brought up to the rear. The little brigantine, with yards square and canvas aback, bumped her way astern, and drifted away—a future derelict. Mr. Todd, near the main rigging of the brig, saw her disappear, but had neither heart nor power to stop her—so new, and horrid, and paralyzing was the sight before him—a hand-to-hand struggle with knives and cutlasses—the wickedest warfare that human beings ever indulged in. A few single-shot pistols exploded, but were not reloaded. The shouting now was done by the mixed crew under Chink. Swarth's men—trained in sheath-knife fencing—saved their breath. Where one could close with his opponent, he had the advantage—a short preliminary wrestle, an opening, a sudden thrust, and there was a man less.

But they could not always close, and those of Swarth's men who had seized cutlasses from the over-supply in the racks of the gun stations did not need to; so there was a nerve-racking jingle of steel added to the uproar as men fenced for their lives. Forward, near the fore rigging, a huge negro of



## *A Fall from Grace*

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Chink's crew lay with a divided shoulder—a victim to Yank Tate's broad-axe, and as the fascinated missionary watched he saw the handle of his broad-axe rise and fall regularly, coming down on heads and blades as a club.

But it became apparent to Mr. Todd that in this furious *mêlée* length of steel was telling; there were more red-shirted men prone upon the deck than there were of the others. Yank had become the centre of an enclosing circle of flourishing blades, which he was keeping at a proper radius; and on the poop deck Captain Swarth was engaged with Chink, and holding his own; nevertheless it was plain that the defenders of the brig were winning. As the missionary looked, Swarth slipped and fell. Before he recovered himself Chink had sunk his blade into his shoulder, and without waiting to repeat the thrust, he sprang to the main-deck to join his men. Then it was that the Reverend Mr. Todd took action.

Selecting a capstan-bar from the rack near him, he whirled it over his head and walked briskly into the fray, his long clerical coat-tails flapping with his motion. His eyes sparkled in his sombre face; his lips were parted and drawn tightly over his gleaming teeth; he growled incoherently; he was

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not pleasant to look upon, nor was he pleasant to meet. A man faced him and fell—with a crushed head; then another, and another. There was no standing before this tall, muscular terror, who whirled, and twisted, and flourished that six-foot club with quicker motion than they could give to their cutlasses. They fell back and left him a path, but he turned upon them. The circle around Yank melted away, and men sprang to meet the new enemy—but only to fall when they reached him. Swarth's crew took heart and fought harder, while Chink, whom Mr. Todd was plainly trying to find, called his followers around him at the forward door of the cabin and bade them defend it. Then the pirate entered the cabin and returned with the canvas ditty-bag.

“Here,” he called, as he held it up. “Here, you humble follower of de meek an’ lowly Saviour. Dis what you want. Take it, an’ call off your dogs.”

“Throw it to me,” yelled the frenzied missionary. “Throw it to me.”

“Stop fightin’, and make terms. We’re not beat yet.” And Mr. Todd essayed to oblige him; but the furious men beside him, with their leader fallen, would not desist. They pressed harder

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upon the little band at the cabin door. Then the bag was thrown—overboard.

Mr. Todd became a homicidal maniac. He yelled and shrieked, struck and prodded, killing three of ten men surrounding Chink before he met the chieftain face to face. Then these two fought—the one with cutlass, the other with that terrible club. There were fifteen of Swarth's men beside him when that duel began, and of these, five fell before the last of Chink's followers stretched upon the deck. The survivors turned to end the single combat raging along the deck from main-mast to foremast; but in this fight there was no room for their short knives.

Early in the fray Chink's cutlass flew in pieces, and he fled to the main-mast, there to arm himself equally. And now, around the deck, forward and aft, to starboard and port, the two men were contesting, with their ponderous weapons, in a fight which in the nature of things could have but one survivor. The giant mulatto, silent and impassive, whirled his club and retreated; the equally tall, but thinner, wirier, and quicker-motivated missionary, yelling and exclaiming insanely, pressed him hard—striving to bring the six-foot club down on the woolly head dodging before him.

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The red-shirted victors formed a circle about them, but not one cared to enter within the sweep of those capstan-bars, which, when they met, rebounded with greater force than is usually given a blacksmith's sledge. The combatants stepped over the dead and living bodies, and upon them; they stooped, endeavouring to lunge; they sprang in the air, and to the right and to the left; they fenced—and their fencing came of no skill acquired by tutelage, but of instincts derived from the age of stone, when clubs were the only weapons and victory the only prize of combat—and at last Chink stumbled on the outstretched arm of a dead man, and the coincident sweep of his club lost its initial direction, just enough to admit of the descending bludgeon of the missionary to strike a glancing blow on his head. He fell, but his head was not injured; it was his crushed shoulder—crushed by the impact of the carom blow, which brought an agonized howl from his throat and the fight to an end. He dropped his weapon and sat upon the deck.

“Surrender!” shouted the missionary, holding his capstan-bar poised.

Chink glared at him, wildly and helplessly, making no response. The men crowded up.

“Bind him hand and foot,” ordered Mr. Todd,

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panting hard, but self-contained now. "Bind him tight. I made him a promise once." The men obeyed him as they would their captain.

Chink's evil face, as they fastened his wrists and ankles, was a composite of all unworthy emotions; yet he made no sound until Mr. Todd ordered the main-staysail halyards overhauled to the deck and a hangman's noose made in the end of the fall. Then he voiced his protest in a loud, wailing tone.

"You won't do dat? O Mister Todd; you won't do dat? Help! Don't hang me. I give you pearls. I got lots. I gib you money to make up. Don't hang me, Mister Todd."

"Hush," answered the missionary, sternly, as they slipped the noose around his neck and drew it tight. "You marked yourself for the vengeance of God when you tortured and robbed a man who had not harmed you, but had the courage to follow you. I warned you.—Up with him, men," he called; "hook the bight in the stanchion sheave and bowse him up."

The howling mulatto was lifted upright, his cries troubling the air until the noose stifled them; then, amid the pitiless laughter and shouting of his executioners, he went aloft to the halyard

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block, to squirm and strangle until death came to him. As he left the deck Mr. Todd bowed his head and lowered his eyes, and remained in this attitude until the rope was belayed; but in this scene of vengeance and reprisal the single-minded Yank Tate took no part.

Mr. Todd, hardly hearing the congratulations of the men left standing, climbed the poop steps and looked for his brigantine. She was out of sight, behind the blank wall of spindrift raised by the storm. He looked vacantly at the red-shirted man at the wheel, who, shouting jubilantly, was pushing his predecessor's body out of his way with his feet. He looked up to the heavens and groaned hoarsely, then raising his arms high above his head, brought them slowly down with a sweeping motion that might have meant renunciation of heaven or defiance of hell. His eye fell upon Captain Swarth, who was beckoning, and weakly trying to make himself heard. He went to him, bound his wound roughly, placed a coil of rope under his head, talked with him for a moment, then went forward.

Yank Tate sat upon the deck beside his victim, the big negro. He had placed his knee beneath the woolly head for a pillow; he was holding a tin

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pot of water to the thick lips of the dying man, and explaining, while tears welled in his honest brown eyes.

"Couldn't help it, old man," he was saying, as Mr. Todd stopped before him. "An' I couldn't do it again, God, no—never again. I can use a club, but not an axe—never again. You're the only one, old man, and I'm d——d sorry."

The glazing eyes brightened a moment, then dulled, and the huge black head rolled to one side. The negro was dead. Yank stood up and looked into the drawn face of Mr. Todd through his tears.

"Yank Tate," said the missionary in a strained voice, "you left my service against my wishes and engaged with Captain Swarth, refusing to take orders from me. You will take them now; I am your superior officer. My life is wasted, my vessel is lost, and my wealth is in the sea. From the sea will I recover it. Captain Swarth is seriously though not fatally injured, and I have engaged with him as mate and quartermaster. May the Lord have mercy on our two souls, Yank—on yours in particular if you ever cross me again. Clear up the decks and throw these carrion overboard."

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“Ay, ay, sir,” answered the astounded carpenter.

Mr. Todd went aft, and Yank wiped his eyes.

“And he called me a backslider,” he muttered.



## THE DUTCH PORT WATCH

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HALF the crew were Liverpool Irishmen—rough, desperate fellows, equally ready to drink and fight on shore and to mutiny at sea, but sailors in head and heart, able seamen in all that the name implies. The other half represented the slums of nearly every seaport of Europe—Danes, Germans, “Sou’wegians,” and “Dagoes,” all classed together by English and American sailors as “Dutchmen.”

The first mate was a Norwegian, a little dried-up fellow who always looked as though he had just been whipped, and in choosing watches, this officer picked the Dutchmen, for reasons that were plain to us all; while the English second mate, a larger, older, and presumably more efficient man, selected the Irishmen and to my satisfaction included me, for I had the true American boy’s distaste for foreigners and considered an Irishman as nearer my kin than any one of the Latin, German, or Scandinavian races.

## *Shipmates*

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The third mate was an American, but a weakling—a young man with a heavy mustache and vapid face, who, from the time he was thrashed by a little cockney stowaway who came to light within a few days, was the object of all hands' derision and contempt. The boatswain, a heavily-built, black-eyed, sun-burned fellow, was the ablest of our officers. Being the only man of the old crew who declined to be worked out at Liverpool, he had been promoted to the post of boatswain solely—as he claimed—to placate him and forestall any possible complaints at New York in regard to the quality of food given to the crew on the last passage. Evidence as to what this food must have been was found in the sprouting grain in old pans and pots in the forecabin; and the boatswain averred that had it not been for the cargo of good wheat the crew would have mutinied, as nothing short of starvation would induce a man to eat the poisonous condemned navy stores which the captain had purchased at San Francisco.

But there was no lack of good food—of its kind—on this passage; and the captain—old Bully McKane, as he was called—made a characteristic speech in regard to it. When the two mates had finished choosing watches and dismissed us, he

## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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stepped to the break of the poop, and bellowed: "Stay where you are—I want a word or two with you." We halted and looked up at the squat figure outlined against the moonlight in the sky.

"I have heard ashore," he began in his raspy voice, "a good deal about my shipping a crew of Dutchmen at 'Frisco that I could safely kill with work on rotten grub; and I have heard that my ship was the hungriest packet that ever docked at Liverpool. I never want to hear that again. I have shipped this time as many tarriers as I could find and as few Dutchmen, and picked the biggest; but I haven't shipped a man I can't get away with. I have laid in full and plenty of the best grub in the market, and I'm going to give you all you can eat of it and as much work as I can lay into you; and if you don't work I'll break every head among you. Now go forward and commence."

The profanity with which he punctuated these remarks is not given; it would not add to their emphasis. This was at eight bells in the evening, but we went "forrard" and "commenced." Night and day throughout the passage we scraped and painted spars and deck-fittings, set up, rattled down and tarred down rigging, and holy-stoned the deck. This last job, which is ordinarily left to the

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end, was begun right in the middle of the tarring and painting, and coincident with the shedding of the officers' coats and their going to work with the rest of us. The captain watched the ship, and to give us time to clean up before making port, sailed her down below the Azores. She was a large double top-gallantsail and skysail yard ship, with a beautiful hard-pine deck on which our holy-stones slid like soap. These holy-stones were blocks of sandstone eighteen inches square, with ropes fast to them by which three men to windward and two to leeward could drag them across the deck. Captain McKane personally superintended this work, and often would seat himself on a holy-stone to increase the pressure; then, while he swore at us, we would ride him back and forth. Once a perspiring Irishman stopped hauling and said: "Can't I make ye a whip next watch below, cappen, so ye kin lick up yer harses?" He was promptly knocked down and stepped upon until he promised to be civil.

The captain was crowding into a short Atlantic run the work which a passage around the Horn is none too long for, with the result that nothing was done thoroughly, and some things done twice over. The men revenged themselves by all sorts

## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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of pretty tricks—for instance, a little scratch would appear in the deck, indicating the presence, on the bottom surface of the holy-stone, of a small pebble. This was always picked out, of course, but usually just before the appearance of the captain in the vicinity and after the deck at that spot resembled a chopping-block. And paint pots and tar pots would sail down from aloft, spattering their contents anywhere; but, as in every case the offender was called down to a painful rebuking, grievances were not thoroughly adjusted in this manner.

Boy-like, I took a hand in this, and successfully. I was sent aloft one day by the captain to overhaul buntlines on the mizzen; and when about to climb to the royal yard I noticed a half-filled tar pot fastened to the runner of the halyards—left there by one of the other watch. The rigging below was filled with men, tarring and painting, and beneath, pacing the now white quarter-deck, was Captain McKane. I weighed the chances, considered that I was the only one on the mizzen who could not show a pot of some kind, also that I was the only one not supposed to have a pot, and, putting my trust in Providence, let it go, giving it a gentle toss to windward. It sprinkled tar on

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every yard and sail in its descent, then, striking the white sky-light amidships, bounded straight for the captain's face, and cutting his cheek open, gently emptied the rest of the tar down his starched shirt-front. Before that pot had passed the top-sail yards I was half-way up to the royal, and while the captain was roaring up, "Come down, every infernal one of you," I was innocently busy at my task on the yard where no tar pots were supposed to be. Down we all came and gave evidence. My disclaimer was loudest as my position was secur-est; but it was not until next watch below that I knew how well my shipmates had stood by me.

"Next time, sonny," said one of them, "take better aim; an' if ye kin put a marline-spike in the pot, do it, for the good of his sconce—the shslave-driver." It was the thoughtless trick of a boy. If that tar pot had struck the captain fairly on the head, our troubles might have ended, as the meanest Dutchman aboard would not have feared the mates, and the boatswain was one of us.

To our other crimes against property we added that of broaching cargo. We found in the 'tween-deck, lashed to a stanchion near the cabin trunk, a half-barrel of Golden Drip sirup belonging either to the cabin stores or to some unoffending

## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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consignees—we did not inquire. We easily picked out the bung in the darkness of the night, and by lowering a clean Manilla rope-yarn into the cask and draining off the adhering sirup into a tin pot, kept both forecastles supplied for the passage. It much improved our duff, the usual sauce for which is Santa Rosa molasses.

This molasses is the last dregs of the vats and bears so close a resemblance to Stockholm tar in viscosity, stickiness, and general nastiness, that in fore-castle discourse it sometimes borrows the name. Every duff day (Sunday and Thursday) two quarts of this stuff would be passed into each fore-castle, and not caring to return it or throw it overboard in the daytime, we merely dumped it into a condemned wash-deck tub, which lay in the fore-castle, and later on found a use for it.

The duff too is an institution only found at sea—a pasty mess of cheap flour and fresh water, lightened with a very little saleratus and shortened with a great deal of slush from the cook's barrel, tied up in a bag and boiled in salt water; but it is a treat to sailors, and duff days are looked forward to. Christmas came on Wednesday and we hoped that it would be a holiday according to custom; but we holy-stoned—profanely—and only found

## *Shipmates*

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the day honoured with duff. For this we were duly thankful, but when the next day (the regular duff day) passed off with the Wednesday pea soup for dinner, our opinion of Captain McKane was heartfelt and unanimous.

At last the awful holy-stoning was finished and the deck scrubbed clean early on a moist day of Gulf Stream weather, at the end of which all hands, including the cook, steward, and carpenter, went at the job of oiling it—half dry as it was. Time was limited and oil plenty, so we literally poured it around in a profusion that would have prevented its drying in a week, even with sunshine to help. All that day we had been painting bulwarks and blocks aloft and continued this work up to the oiling of the deck, the result being that night came down with wet paint everywhere which we were not supposed to touch, and a slippery deck beneath us which we were not supposed to walk on, planks for this being laid around where travel was necessary.

But with the coming of night came a Cape Hatteras gale from the northeast with sleet and snow. Then was developed a curious state of affairs—not a man on board but the boatswain knew the ropes. We had made sail in the Channel as a new



## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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crew always does—by feeling our way; we had not shortened sail once since then and touched no ropes but braces; she was a curiously rigged craft with experimental gear all through her; and with skysailclew-lines and buntlines mingling with royal gear, and the extra upper top-gallant down-hauls and spilling-lines hidden in a maze of lower buntlines at the fife-rail, she presented, with her oily deck, a problem that we did not solve for ten hours. Ten terrible hours they were, too, of darkness and storm, of freezing wind and blinding sleet and snow. The ship was in ballast trim and was tossed over the seas like an egg-shell. With a deck made greasier by the mixture of oil and snow, no one was sure of his footing, and it was a common occurrence that night for a dozen or fifteen men to be launched headlong toward the lee-bow as she dived into a sea.

A general rule is to heave-to on the starboard tack north of the equator, in order to drift away from the storm-centre; but with Cape Hatteras to leeward, Captain McKane did not dare. He put the ship on the port tack, and nearly on her beam ends from the increasing pressure, she drifted to sea while we endeavoured to shorten sail. When thoroughly drenched, one by one, we found an op-

## *Shipmates*

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portunity to sneak into the forecastle and don oil-skins.

Skysails, royals, and head-sails came in easily in the darkness by our letting go all ropes which might contain among them sheets or halyards and hauling on anything that might be a buntline, clew-line, or downhaul. We got the upper top-gallant-sails down but could not find, in the inky smudge, buntlines or spilling-lines, so left them to clew up the lower. This done, we reduced the upper top-sails to hollow cylinders—unable as with the upper top-gallant-sails to find the spilling-lines—and then hauled up the courses by “brute strength and stupidity”—all hands, for instance, tugging at a fore buntline for a full half-hour without gaining an inch before discovering that the bight of a gasket was jammed in the block above. With the exception of the boatswain, more incompetent officers than ours never pretended to oversee a crew of men. Now and then a roar would leave the poop from the captain, which the boatswain would answer and try to attend to, but the three mates kept themselves out of his sight—huddled under the lee of the weather rail or the forward house—and rarely uttered an order.

The outer and flying jibs were bags on the jib-

## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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boom threatening to tear it out of her; for, light as the ship was, she sometimes spooned up a green sea; and with nothing set now but the lower top-sails, two head-sails, and the spanker—everything else being in bights or ribbons—we went aloft to furl. I found myself on the mizzen skysail yard—where I belonged—and spent a cool hour there before I mastered the sail; for by this time it was blowing so hard that breathing was difficult facing the wind, and in the rigging, climbing up was easier than climbing down.

Descending, I found the royal furled, the upper top-gallant yard stripped bare—I had not heard the sail go—and four of my Irish watch mates struggling with a remnant of the lower top-gallant-sail. My assistance, slight as it was, turned the balance and we conquered it. Below us was the rest of the watch fighting the upper topsail, and with nothing accomplished. We joined them, but it was only by lying out at full length on that rigid cylinder and fishing with our toes for the gaskets tossed up from underneath that we finally smothered the sail and furled it. The cro'-jack, with its clews hauled into the bunt, was easy, compared with that topsail, and we made short work of it, coming down to go up the main.

## Shipmates

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Again I found myself alone—on the main sky-sail yard—and yelled for help, as this sail was a task for a grown man in easier weather. In about ten minutes a man came up from below and together we furled it, after I was nearly brushed from the yard by the parting of the weather bunt-line; then we descended to the royal and were compelled to shout again for help. The men on the top-gallant yard were having their hands full, and answered, “Cut the bloomin’ rag away and give us a hand.” As royals were cheaper than top-gallant-sails, and as the thrashing sail was endangering the slight spar, we obliged them, I at the weather side barely getting off the foot-rope before the sail whirled over my head, smothering my companion’s curses and binding him tight. I cut the clew-lines, and in half a minute more there was nothing but shreds left of the main royal.

Ten Irishmen and an active boy can furl an upper main top-gallant-sail, no matter how hard it blows, *if they have time*, but we had begun to fear that we would not have time before the gale ended; we were encouraging one another to cut it away—which was easier than furling—and the man farthest to leeward had ruined his sheath-knife by a desperate slash in the darkness at a chain head ear-

## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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ing, when one man in the bunt caught a bare inch of a gasket tossed up by a man on the yard below. The men each side of him held his legs while he crawled out on the hollow cushion of icy canvas and secured a firmer grip; then he was dragged back, the gasket coming with him; others caught hold, and the sail was smothered and furled in ten minutes.

The lower top-gallant-sail with clews amidships was a five minutes' job, and we came down to the upper topsail yard and spread out on that frozen cylinder, knowing to a man that we could not furl it; but it was our business to try, and we did, to the extent of punching our fists into it without making a dent, though hurting our knuckles. Neither spilling-lines nor reef-tackles had been touched; but the upper and lower edges of the sail were brought close together by the downhauls, and through this great pipe the wind hummed with a sound that I have often heard in the subtones of a pipe-organ. It prevented all communication by speech, and we looked for some gesture or sign from the boatswain in the slings to indicate what we were to do, and saw him pointing forward. There, through the darkness and snow, we made out the port watch streaming slowly down the

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foretopmast rigging, leaving behind them a furled skysail and royal—all they had done—and two top-gallant-sails in ribbons.

Motioning us to remain, the boatswain descended, and after a while we felt the spilling-lines creasing into the sail; but they were not hauled home, nor were the reef-tackles touched. The boatswain came back and beckoned us down. He told us afterward that he had chased the Dutchmen out of their forecandle and put the spilling-lines in their hands, but they were half-frozen, almost unable to get out of their own way, and that it was impossible to get them into the rigging. The three mates were out of sight—he did not know where.

We descended with ice on our left sides and breasts a quarter inch thick, leaving untouched the mainsail, which now resembled a snow-drift on the lee yard-arm; for it was useless for one watch to attempt furling it. We had worked bare-handed aloft, our blood was circulating, and we had not really suffered from cold; but no sensation that I can remember ever equalled the agreeable warmth I experienced under the lee of the weather rail on deck. I was thirsty, and while I had the chance, darted into the “boys’

## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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room " to get a drink of water. There, sitting on my chest, was the third mate, crying.

"What's the matter, Mr. Parker?" I asked, rather amazed.

"Got a spare sou'wester, boy?" he whimpered. "I've lost mine."

I had one, and pulling it from my bunk, gave it to him, secured my drink, and stepped out on deck, meeting the boatswain coming in—possibly on the same errand that had brought me. Then, through the open door, I heard some bad language, and soon out shot Mr. Parker with the boatswain's fist close behind. He fell on the main hatch and the boatswain followed, kicked him off the hatch to the greasy deck and into the lee scuppers, kicked him solidly and silently a few times more, and left him. The pitiful officer picked himself up, sneaked forward, and was not seen again until the trouble was over.

Now there came a roar from the captain on the quarter-deck steps. "Bosun," he called, "I want you to take your crowd of Micks up the fore and try to stow those t'-gallant-sails. If you can't do it, cut 'em away 'fore they take the spars out of her. The port watch are dead and my officers are hidden. Bear a hand now."

## *Shipmates*

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"Ay, ay, sir," answered the boatswain cheerfully. "Come on, bullies," he said to us; "we'll do their work for 'em, and break their heads afterward."

"Not much," I said to myself; "I've had enough." For, seventeen years old, half-formed and irresponsible, I felt that I had done my share; and, resolved on doing a little "soldiering" myself, went forward with the grumbling crowd, and farther than they; for I shot into the arms of the first mate, who, with some of his watch, was skulking under the top-gallant forecastle.

"Vat yer vant here, boy?" he snarled viciously. "Get oud on deck." I got, according to my orders, and it was perhaps well for the others that the mate—possibly through shame—followed me; for at the weather fore rigging I met the captain.

"Lay aloft there," he shouted, and this was repeated by the mate behind with the addition: "Hidin' under der fo'castle, sir; I yoost chased him out."

"It's a lie, captain," I yelled from the sheer-pole. "I've been aloft half the night."

"And where have you been, you blasted old hen?" I heard the captain say in his mighty voice.



## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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Then, as I climbed the ratlines and their figures became indistinct in the darkness, I heard, even above the roar of the gale, a crashing sound followed by a hollow thud—as of a skull impacting on a water-tank—and knew that something had happened to the mate.

I joined my watch-mates on the top-gallant yard and was called a fool for coming. Our task was a hard one; but the very men who had cut away a good main royal and mizzen top-gallant-sail rather than furl them now laboured like horses to save two worthless remnants, because it was a job given up by the other watch. We conquered the ragged tangle, lashed it to both yards, and descended, making no pretence of an attempt to furl the sails beneath. It would have been as easy to furl a section of a steamship's funnel as that hollow, icy upper topsail humming its song to the gale; and as for the foresail—snow and sleet and freezing spindrift were binding it tighter than a man-of-war's crew could have done. It thrashed a little, as it hung in the buntlines, but not enough to damage it.

As I felt again that agreeable warmth under the weather rail, I vowed by all I held holy that no power on earth should get me aloft again that

## *Shipmates*

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night; but along came the stricken and rejuvenated Dutch mate.

“Now den—now den, you starboard watch; go oud and stow der yibs—stow der ouder and flyin’ yibs,” he called, as loudly and bravely as though his record was good.

“Stow nothin’,” growled an Irishman; “where’s yer own crowd?”

“We b’long aft—we’ve done our work,” said others.

“Vell, come aft and clew up der mizzen topsail. Hurrah, now; you belong on der mizzen, you say.”

Just then a dark figure passed behind the mate, and he went down, slid to leeward on the slippery deck, and crawled aft in the darkness. Something, or somebody, must have hit him; and, as nobody claimed the credit, I think the dark figure was the boatswain, who, being an officer, waived the later honors.

But with the mate thus disposed of we still had the captain, who was not so easy. He was forward in a few moments, indignantly rebuking us with bad words and a belaying-pin, and we went aft at his behest and clewed up his mizzen topsail; then we climbed aloft—I going along in spite of my vow—and spread ourselves along the

## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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icy yard and foot-rope to another half-hour's work. We furled it, after a fashion, and compacted, one with the other along the yard before laying in, that our next task would be to hunt for the port watch.

But our next task was really a scramble for dear life in along the yard. About half of us were into the rigging when the weather end of the furled topsail lifted off the yard; then, with a snapping of gaskets and robands, and a flapping, thrashing, and scattering of ice, the whole sail went over to leeward, going to pieces almost before it was blown from the yard. A later investigation by the boatswain discovered the outer gasket and a few robands, as well as the bolt-ropes close to the head-cringle, nearly cut through—indicating some sheath-knife work. The man farthest to windward, and who must have done it, was the one who had been knocked down at the holy-stoning; but he was not accused or troubled—the boatswain saying nothing about it.

On reaching the deck we trooped forward, the captain following us, cursing and roaring to “take in the spanker.” We answered him not. We cleaned out the midship capstan-bar rack, which gave us six long clubs. Five belaying-pins—my own an iron affair—completed our armament, and

## *Shipmates*

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we hunted for Dutchmen. We found them under the top-gallant forecastle, in the paint locker and boatswain's locker, and in their own forecastle—two in their bunks—with the door closed.

We hammered, punched, kicked, and cuffed them, crowding them on deck, up the forecastle steps, and out the icy bowsprit. We clustered in the knightheads, threatening to brain the first Dutchman who came in before the jibs were stowed; and as they were, evidently, more afraid of us than they were of the storm and the danger, they stowed the jibs. When they came in we took it upon ourselves to let go the inner-jib halyards. They hauled it down and went out and stowed it, while we bossed the job. Then we chased them aft and told the captain that if he wanted the spanker furled we would have it done for him. He replied that he would like to have it furled (he had grasped the situation and wisely accepted it); we asked him—very respectfully—if he wanted it reefed first, and he said that he did; so we saw that it was done. The first mate was there and assisted in the job, and during the persuasion necessary was rapped on the head more than once by an iron belaying-pin.

As the ship was carrying too much head-sail

## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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now to balance well, we suggested taking off the foretopmast-staysail, to which the captain's dignity prevented a response; but we drove them forward again, took in this sail, and consulted. We were now under the fore and main lower topsails with the upper topsails and courses unfurled, but steady. If it had been in the power of all hands to have furled either of these last, we would have driven our slaves aloft and gone with them; for we were officers for the first time, and enjoyed the experience.

It was now after four o'clock in the morning and the Dutchmen's watch below, so we relieved the wheel—the "Sou'wegian" who had steered eleven hours in a warm, dry wheel-house complaining bitterly of his long trick when he came forward until silenced by an Irish fist—but we compelled them to coil up the gear before allowing a man to leave the deck. While this was going on the second mate appeared—quietly coiling up ropes. Where this officer had been during the trouble, and how he explained to the captain, is a mystery. He was a shrewd, experienced man—an officer for years—but had seemed to go to pieces that night. Neither he, nor the first and third mates, received another order from the cap-

## *Shipmates*

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tain, or gave one to the men, for the rest of the passage. They moved about the decks, trying to be of use in a half-hearted, embarrassed way, but were thoroughly ignored by the captain, and insulted by the men.

The storm-centre must have been past us now, to the eastward, and travelling faster than our drift; for the wind moderated at daylight. Before evening we had made top-gallant sails, and by the next morning the whole of the canvas, bending new sails in place of those lost. Cold weather continued as we sailed up to Sandy Hook, and one would have thought that, after our assuming police duty during the blow, Captain McKane would hesitate to "work us up" any more. But he kept us at it, the last job given the Irish half being to tar down the fore rigging at night in the middle watch, after the tug had taken our line.

Captain McKane did not know until the sun had warmed up his rigging in port, and the fore channels, rail and deck were covered on both sides with a black, sticky mess, that we had filled our tar pots with the despised Santa Rosa molasses accumulated in the old wash-deck tub. It remained in place only as long as the rigging was cold. But the treacle on the forward deck was not

## *The Dutch Port Watch*

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the only disfiguration of this big "skysail yarder" which we had worked so hard to make a yacht of. Deck and paintwork from bow to stern were spotted like the hide of a brindle cow, while one side of every fixture, spar, and rope, from the deck to the trucks, was covered with a coating of salt, left there as the frozen spindrift thawed, so that from a position four points off the port bow she could easily appear in a half light as a dingy, dilapidated, spectral Flying Dutchman.





## ON THE FORECASTLE DECK

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“Who goes on lookout?”

I am the man and I call out my name.

“Watch out for a flashing white light on the port bow. Relieve the wheel and lookout. That’ll do the watch.”

A man goes aft to the wheel, the watch goes below, and I climb the steps to the forecastle deck, where my predecessor is waiting at the capstan.

“Keep your eyes peeled for a flash-light ahead and to port. Pass the word along.”

“All right. Go below—but what do they expect it is?”

“Don’t know. Some lighthouse; we’re on soundings.”

He is gone. I rub the sleep from my eyes and scan the clear-cut horizon ahead. There is no sign of a light, and I pace up and down, and back and forth from cathead to cathead, with an occasional glance over the sea. It is a beautiful night—the kind that brings meditation and retrospection.

## *Shipmates*

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The full moon hangs in the southern sky, and depending from it to the horizon is a darkening of the deep blue which can only be likened to a shadow or a curtain of shade. From a point a hundred yards from the ship to the base of this curtain extends a glittering, narrowing track of liquid fire. There are a few stars shining faintly in the flood of light; there is wind, a souging breath aloft, just strong enough to belly the canvas; overboard is a tinkling, musical wash of water, accentuated to a rhythmical crash under the bow as the ship buries her cutwater, and losing volume on the way aft to revive in the swirling cross-currents of the wake. I can hear the murmur of my watch mates' voices amidships, and the regular thumping of the mate's boot heels on the poop. He is pacing up and down like myself, perhaps from habit, perhaps to waken himself; for we have all lost much sleep lately.

But I am wide awake—the moonlight and its memories have banished the sleep—and I halt in my walk to lean over the capstan, with no fear of the drowsiness which usually attends the first half-hour of the watch on deck at night. It was just such a night as this when I once walked through a lane with a girl and stopped at the gate of a flower-filled yard. And though my eyes are mechanically

## *On the Forecastle Deck*

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fixed upon the horizon ahead and to port, watching for that flashing white light, my mental vision is taken up with the image of the girl. She is facing me, one small hand resting on the gate, one small foot peeping from beneath her dress, the colour gone from the cheek, and the tears starting in her eyes. In the strong moonlight I can see the womanly pity and regret in her sweet face, the twitching at the corners of her mouth, and the slow, troubled nodding of her head. She is saying: "No, no; I am not for you. We are not alike. You must go your way, and I must go mine. We can not even be friends, for there is no middle ground."

And that is why I am back before the mast this night, hanging over the capstan, watching for a flashing white light and thinking of her. The rebellious heart in my breast chokes me, and the rebellious brain in my head throbs in pain while it tries to formulate the reason of it all—why I, who must love her through life, am debarred on this account alone from her friendship, from her society—from even her acquaintance. I, who would give my all for a smile, for a glance of recognition, must not know her, speak to her, nor meet her. The stranger yet unborn is nearer to her

## Shipmates

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than am I, and of the millions of human beings in the world she is farthest removed from me.

Because, for certain temperaments, *there is no middle ground*.

It is a bitter speculation, and not all men have known it. In my own case I can only work out the problem to this: I love because I can appreciate—I lose because I love too much.

A twinkle of light shows on the dark line of horizon. I stand erect to make sure, and it is gone. As I watch it sparkles again.

“Flashing white light on the port bow, sir,” I sing out, glad of the relief to my bitterness of mind—gratified that I had been first to see it.

“All right.”

I watch the light. It is not regular in its coming and going; it has a refulgence uncommon in beacon lights; it leaps to a flare, and sinks to a glow; it expands to a nebula, and breaks up into fragments.

“Keep her away for that light,” I hear the mate call to the man at the wheel; then, to the third mate: “Rouse out all hands; send up a rocket or show a torch. That’s a ship afire.”

A ship afire! I turn and look again. There is no mistake—the mate is right. I can clearly

## *On the Forecastle Deck*

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make out two slim spars and a black funnel, sharply cut in the reflection. The blaze is aft, and the steamer is heading toward us, while from our change of course she takes a position from two points on the port bow to one directly ahead.

As though the powers behind the wind had taken direct cognizance of the extremity, the breeze freshens with our change of course, and we rush down the wind with breaking seas curling under our counter. Yards are square as before, for the change merely brings the wind from slightly on one quarter to slightly on the other. Soon we can make out the shape and position of deck houses and the indefinite shadow of hull beneath. Over the sparkling flare, and left behind by her motion, stretches a canopy of smoke; and there is a black thickening and rise of her sheer forward which can be nothing but closely packed human beings.

The watch below is out. Men are clewing up the courses; others are dancing aloft to the foreyard with hoisting tackles; aft, the third mate and the ship's boys are clearing away a quarter-boat, and amidships the carpenter is sending up rockets. But I am on lookout, and until called down or relieved, can take no part in this.

## *Shipmates*

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With the increase of wind comes a lowering of temperature and a darkening of the sky. I shiver, and buttoning my jacket snug to my throat, resume my walk back and forth from cathead to cathead. A glance aft shows me the southern sky shaded with an almost opaque curtain of cloud; the moon is nearly obscured. A few flakes of snow brush my cheek; a keener edge comes to the pressure of wind, and aloft the æolian song of a new-born gale wails in the rigging. There will be trouble and grief to-night, I know: boat work in a snow-storm and rising sea.

“Keep a good lookout for’ard, there,” roars the mate from amidships, and I answer, thankful, with a sailor’s irresponsibility, that mine is the easiest duty on board.

Fast as we are charging toward the flaming craft, the snow squall is faster, and soon details are hidden; nothing but a red glow guides the man at the wheel, and toward this we rush at ten knots, while the blaze itself approaches at an equal speed, until again details are shown us. She is still head to wind; but engines have stopped, and steam is escaping in a muffled roar. The fire has reached the engine-room, and we are just in time. To our ears against the gale come screamings

## *On the Forecastle Deck*

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and shoutings, and we see frantic waving of hats.

“Check in starboard fore and port cro’ jack braces,” calls the skipper from the poop. “Leave the main-yards square till we try her. Down wi’ the wheel. Starboard—hard over.”

Around we come with the swinging of the yards until the canvas on the main is aback; the helmsman is given a course and the ship is tried. A little manipulation of the main-yards satisfies the skipper, and we lie steady on the port bow of the steamer, drifting bodily to leeward, with vicious seas from squarely abeam pounding our weather side. We are hove to, with our starboard fore yard-arm directly over the boats on the forward house. A skilful manœuvre, but he is a skilful skipper.

“Over with the boats!”

They are already cleared away, turned on their keels, and the yard-arm tackles hooked to the ring-bolts. Up they rise, one at a time, with two men in each to unhook and drop the boat back to the main channels. Outboard they swing until the two end tackles from the fore and main yards can take their weight, and they descend to the water. One at a time the three boats are launched to the

## *Shipmates*

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tune of the mate's roaring orders, and not a man is hurt or a drop of water shipped. A skilful job, but—he is a skilful mate.

Aft, the ship's boys under the third mate have lowered the lee quarter-boat, and are off with a hurrah, just ahead of the first of the whale-boats from forward. Then follow the rest: four boats' crews are racing to leeward to save life, cheering as they disappear in a thick smudge of snow from which they may not return. As the third mate is in the quarter-boat, the other three must be in charge of the second mate and the two boatswains, leaving the first mate aboard; for I hear again his thundering voice from the poop: "Keep a good lookout for'ard, there."

I answer again, and watch in the direction of the steamer. The towering flame seems to cut the snow in a line with my eyes; for, though I can see her distinctly, and apparently can see the crisping sea beneath my line of sight, the boats are invisible. I look slowly around at the inclosing wall of gray, and see nothing but our spars and deck fittings. No prompt report from a lookout could save a ship hove to in this snow should anything under sail or steam come out of that gray wall: yet I am on lookout, and my duty is to watch.



## *On the Forecastle Deck*

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But I would now rather be in one of those boats, cheering with the rest as I pull to save life.

A rocket rises from amidships at regular intervals. We have a lazaret half full and the carpenter does not spare them. Up they go, whizzing and sputtering, high above the royal yards before they turn down and burst. It is this bursting in mid-air that is depended upon to show our direction to the boats: it can be seen through snow and fog that would obscure the fiery line of ascent.

I turn to the burning steamer. She is now on our starboard bow, drifting to leeward at a lesser rate than ours, for we are under sail. She is pointing our way, nearly end on, and the flames amidships are lapping the bridge near the foremost—this from the change of head to beam wind. The black thickening at the forward rail is now thicker, and I can plainly see little dots and spots descending from it—people jumping, probably into our boats.

This is soon confirmed. The dots and spots cease dropping, and a faint cheer comes over the sea. Rocket after rocket goes aloft until a rousing hail to starboard indicates the return of the first boat. It is the quarter-boat. She comes

## *Shipmates*

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ghost-like and immense out of the snow, and the third mate sings out:

“ Women and children, sir. Let’s have a bosun’s chair.”

The boat comes around to the lee side. Four men have been left aboard and the bosun’s chair is already rigged. Down it goes from the lee main-yard and brings up a woman. Down again; up with another. Then comes a man with a child in his arms; then more men. The steward ministers unto them, and the boat disappears into the gray.

The other boats heave in sight, one by one, and discharge their living freight; then back to the steamer and back to the ship. The decks are filling with men and boys, and here and there a woman or a child. Some seek the shelter of the forward house, and stare to windward at the red glare upon the gray wall. One slight figure leaves this group, steps upon the forehatch, and looks steadily up at me.

We are drifting faster than the blazing steamer; she is now on our port bow, and our distance is increasing; but, as I watch, the black line on her forward rail grows thinner and thinner, while boat after boat comes out of the snow and

## *On the Forecastle Deck*

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returns to her. Then they come, the four together, and I hear the joyful hail of the second mate: "Got 'em all, sir. Good thing, too. There's powder in her hold."

I step to leeward and look down on the confusion below where three boats endeavour to keep clear of each other while a fourth unloads. Then I return to the capstan, where, facing me in the flurry of snowflakes, is a slight figure—a woman. One small hand rests upon the capstan, one small foot peeps from beneath her dress. I had seen this attitude in a girl at a gate in the moonlight. The parallel is more complete—there is the same slow, troubled nodding of the head. It is more than complete; it is the girl. For, though I can not distinguish her features, I know her voice when she speaks.

"You would not come home, so I come to you. Why would you not come? I waited so long."

I spring toward her, and she advances, her head still slowly nodding. I forget the situation—the storm, the crowded decks, my position on lookout, our isolated prominence in full view of those who would look—and I extend my arms.

But a sudden lighting up of the dull-hued blanket of sea and sky startles us both. Then

## *Shipmates*

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comes gray darkness, and on the port bow is a faint point of light where had shown the flare of the burning steamer; then a shock, and a report like the boom of near-by thunder, and, with the point of light fast fixed in my eyes, I hear a thundering voice from the poop: "Keep a good lookout forward, there."

A shiver, colder than the snow, passes through me; the girl seems to move away into nothingness; the gray of the snow-filled air changes to the clear brightness of a moonlit sky, and I am hanging over the capstan still gazing at a point of light burning steadily on the port bow. It bursts into a flare for a second, then subsides to its steady glow.

"Ay, ay, sir," I manage to answer, while my brain reels and my legs quiver under my weight. "Flashing white light on the port bow, sir."

"All right—all right. Keep your eyes open on lookout, there." But the mate does not come forward.

I have slept on lookout. How long I do not know, until a watch-mate appears within call and I hail him.

"How many times did the mate sing out to keep a good lookout?"

## *On the Forecastle Deck*

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“Once. He saw the light ’fore you did. Been asleep?”

“About a second or two.”

Dreams are curious in that they require no time that can be measured by finite units. That call from the mate to “keep a good lookout for’ard, there,” which I heard twice at different times in my dream, was the call which wakened me. A dream is an instantaneous photograph, not a moving picture of sequences, and I had long known it. But what I do not know, and what I shall learn when I reach shore, is the inner meaning of that dream. I shall be there in a month, when the moon will again be full; and I shall seek a quiet country village that I know, a lane in that village, a gate in the lane, a house behind the gate, a girl in the house. I shall ask her if, at half past twelve of this night, she did not dream of storm and fire, and rescue at sea.

I may also ask her something else.

THE END



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